DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 481 832 CE 085 651

AUTHOR	Stewart, Derek B.
TITLE	Military Education: DOD Needs To Align Academy Preparatory Schools' Mission Statements with Overall Guidance and Establish Performance Goals. Report to the Subcommittee on Defense, Committee on Appropriations, House of Representatives.
INSTITUTION	General Accounting Office, Washington, DC.
REPORT NO	GAO-03-1017
PUB DATE	2003-09-00
NOTE	59p.
AVAILABLE FROM	U.S. General Accounting Office, P.O. Box 6015, Gaithersburg, MD 20884-6015 (first copy free; additional copies $2.00 each; 100 or more: 25% discount). For full text: http://www.gao.gov/ new.items/d031017.pdf.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Evaluative (142)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Accountability; Armed Forces; Articulation (Education); Educational Assessment; *Educational Objectives; Evaluation; High Schools; Institutional Evaluation; *Institutional Mission; *Military Schools; *Mission Statements; *School Effectiveness; Strategic Planning
IDENTIFIERS	Air Force Academy CO; Department of Defense; Military Academy (West Point) NY; Naval Academy Preparatory School RI

ABSTRACT

Each year, the U.S. Air Force Academy, the U.S. Military Academy, and the U.S. Naval Academy combined spend tens of millions of dollars to operate preparatory schools that provide an alternative avenue for about 700 students annually to gain admission to the service academies. The Department of Defense (DOD) requested that the General Accounting Office (GAO) review the 3 service academies and specifically assess the following: (1) the adequacy of their current mission statements; (2) the effectiveness of these schools in accomplishing their missions; and (3) the effectiveness of DOD oversight of these schools. The GAO found that the schools' current mission statements do not clearly articulate the purpose for which the schools are being used by their respective service academies; that it is difficult to evaluate how effective the schools have been in accomplishing their missions because performance goals have not been established; and the effectiveness of oversight is limited because the existing oversight framework does not include performance goals and measures. The GAO recommends that the DOD align the preparatory schools' mission statements with DOD guidance and the academies' expectations; establish quantified performance goals and measures for the schools; and enhance the existing oversight framework for assessing the schools' performance. (Contains 9 appendices, 3 tables, and 30 figures.) (MO)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

EA EATR 0396

United States General Accounting Office

GAO

Report to the Subcommittee on Defense, Committee on Appropriations, House of Representatives

September 2003

MILITARY EDUCATION

DOD Needs to Align Academy Preparatory Schools' Mission Statements with Overall Guidance and Establish Performance Goals

ED 481 832

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

CE 083 657

GAO
Accountability • Integrity • Reliability

GAO-03-1017

2

September 2003

MILITARY EDUCATION

DOD Needs to Align Academy Preparatory Schools' Mission Statements with Overall Guidance and Establish Performance Goals

GAO Accountability · Integrity · Reliability

Highlights

Highlights of GAO-03-1017, a report to the Subcommittee on Defense, Committee on Appropriations, House of Representatives

Why GAO Did This Study

Each year, the U.S. Air Force Academy, the U.S. Military Academy, and the U.S. Naval Academy combined spend tens of millions of dollars to operate preparatory schools that provide an alternative avenue for about 700 students annually to gain admission to the service academies. Service academy officials screen all applicants to identify those who they believe could succeed at the academies but who would benefit from more preparation. The Department of Defense (DOD) pays the full cost of providing this preparation. GAO was asked to review the three service academy preparatory schools, and this report specifically assesses (1) the adequacy of their current mission statements, (2) the effectiveness of these schools in accomplishing their missions, and (3) the effectiveness of DOD oversight of these schools.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that the Secretary of Defense direct DOD, in concert with the services and the service academies, to align the preparatory schools' mission statements with DOD guidance and the academies' expectations; establish quantified performance goals and measures for the schools; and enhance the existing oversight framework for assessing the schools' performance. In commenting on a draft of this report, DOD agreed with the recommendations.

www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-03-1017.

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact Derek B. Stewart at (202) 512-5559 or stewartd@gao.gov.

What GAO Found

The three service academy preparatory schools' current mission statements do not clearly articulate the purpose for which the schools are being used by their respective service academies. In accordance with DOD guidance and the service academies' expectations, the preparatory schools give primary consideration for enrollment to enlisted personnel, minorities, women, and recruited athletes. However, the preparatory school mission statements are not clearly aligned with DOD guidance and the academies' expectations. This is a continuing problem, which GAO first reported in 1992. Without clear mission statements, the service academies and their respective preparatory schools cannot establish goals that fully reflect the preparatory schools' intended purpose.

It is difficult to evaluate how effective the preparatory schools have been in accomplishing their missions because the service academies have not established performance goals for the preparatory schools. Without specific performance goals, there is no objective yardstick against which to gauge preparatory school effectiveness, as would be consistent with the principle of best practices for ensuring optimal return on investment.

The effectiveness of DOD, military service, and service academy oversight is limited because the existing oversight framework for assessing preparatory school performance does not include performance goals and measures against which to objectively assess performance. DOD and the services receive annual reports from the academies on preparatory school performance. Without stated performance goals and measures, however, the reports do not offer DOD, the services, or the service academies as good an insight into the preparatory schools' performance and their return on investment as they could.

Academy Preparatory School Operating Costs and Cost Per Graduate, Fiscal Years 1999-2002

Academy preparatory school	Cost category	FY 1999	FY 2000	FY 2001	FY 2002
U.S. Air Force Academy Preparatory School	Total operating costs	$6,381,169	$5,385,619	$5,628,625	$5,459,059
	Cost per graduate	36,673	32,057	30,425	30,842
U.S. Military Academy Preparatory School	Total operating costs	6,544,277	6,993,648	7,087,020	7,325,311
	Cost per graduate	34,263	35,144	38,727	41,859
U.S. Naval Academy Preparatory School	Total operating costs	7,212,997	8,136,649	8,549,809	9,395,421
	Cost per graduate	35,015	43,982	42,117	40,850

Source: DOD.

Contents

Letter		1
	Results in Brief	2
	Background	4
	Preparatory School Missions Are Not Clearly Defined	8
	Preparatory Schools Maintain Performance Data, but Mission Effectiveness Is Difficult to Evaluate	12
	DOD Lacks a Complete Framework to Facilitate More Effective Oversight of the Preparatory Schools	17
	Conclusions	18
	Recommendations for Executive Action	18
	Agency Comments	19
Appendix I	**Scope and Methodology**	20
Appendix II	**General Information about the Three Service Academy Preparatory Schools**	22
Appendix III	**Preparatory School Enrollment**	23
Appendix IV	**Students Who Entered the Preparatory Schools and Graduated from or Are Still Attending the Academies**	26
Appendix V	**Students Who Entered the Preparatory Schools and Graduated from the Preparatory Schools**	32
Appendix VI	**Students Who Graduated from the Preparatory Schools and Accepted Appointments to the Academies**	38

Appendix VII **Academy Graduation Rates for Preparatory School Graduates Versus Direct Appointees** 44

Appendix VIII **Comments from the Department of Defense** 47

Appendix IX **GAO Contact and Staff Acknowledgments** 49

Tables

Table 1: Demographics for Preparatory Schools, Class of 2002 6
Table 2: Service Academy Preparatory School Operating Costs and Cost per Graduate, Fiscal Years 1999-2002 7
Table 3: Preparatory School Mission Statements 9

Figures

Figure 1: Service Academies' Preparatory School Locations 5
Figure 2: Average Preparatory School Enrollment, by Target Group, for Preparatory School Academic Years 1993 through 2002 10
Figure 3: Average Service Academy Target Group Enrollment, by Academy Preparatory School, for Preparatory School Academic Years 1993 through 2002 11
Figure 4: Average Number of Students Admitted to the Preparatory Schools and Graduating from or Still Attending an Academy for Preparatory School Academic Years 1993 through 2002 13
Figure 5: Comparison between Academy Grade Point Averages of Preparatory School Graduates and of Academy Student Bodies as a Whole for the Academy Class of 2002 15
Figure 6: Comparison between Average Academy Graduation Rates of Preparatory School Graduates and of Direct Appointees for Preparatory School Academic Years 1993 through 1998 16
Figure 7: Percentage of Total Enrollment, by Target Groups, at the U.S. Air Force Academy Preparatory School for Preparatory School Academic Years 1993 through 2002 23

Figure 8: Percentage of Total Enrollment, by Target Groups, at the U.S. Military Academy Preparatory School for Preparatory School Academic Years 1993 through 2002 24
Figure 9: Percentage of Total Enrollment, by Target Groups, at the U.S. Naval Academy Preparatory School for Preparatory School Academic Years 1993 through 2002 25
Figure 10: Percentage of Total U.S. Air Force Academy Preparatory School Enrollment Graduating from or Still Attending the U.S. Air Force Academy for Preparatory School Academic Years 1993 through 2002 26
Figure 11: Percentage of Four Target Groups Entering the U.S. Air Force Academy Preparatory School and Graduating from or Still Attending the U.S. Air Force Academy for Preparatory School Academic Years 1993 through 2002 27
Figure 12: Percentage of Total U.S. Military Academy Preparatory School Enrollment Graduating from or Still Attending the U.S. Military Academy for Preparatory School Academic Years 1993 through 2002 28
Figure 13: Percentage of Four Target Groups Entering the U.S. Military Academy Preparatory School and Graduating from or Still Attending the U.S. Military Academy for Preparatory School Academic Years 1993 through 2002 29
Figure 14: Percentage of Total U.S. Naval Academy Preparatory School Enrollment Graduating from or Still Attending the U.S. Naval Academy for Preparatory School Academic Years 1993 through 2002 30
Figure 15: Percentage of Four Target Groups Entering the U.S. Naval Academy Preparatory School and Graduating from or Still Attending the U.S. Naval Academy for Preparatory School Academic Years 1993 through 2002 31
Figure 16: Percentage of Students Graduating from the U.S. Air Force Academy Preparatory School for Preparatory School Academic Years 1993 through 2002 32
Figure 17: Percentage of Four Target Groups Graduating from the U.S. Air Force Academy Preparatory School for Preparatory School Academic Years 1993 through 2002 33
Figure 18: Percentage of Students Graduating from the U.S. Military Academy Preparatory School for Preparatory School Academic Years 1993 through 2002 34
Figure 19: Percentage of Four Target Groups Graduating from the U.S. Military Academy Preparatory School for Preparatory School Academic Years 1993 through 2002 35

Figure 20: Percentage of Students Graduating from the U.S. Naval Academy Preparatory School for Preparatory School Academic Years 1993 through 2002 36
Figure 21: Percentage of Four Target Groups Graduating from the U.S. Naval Academy Preparatory School for Preparatory School Academic Years 1993 through 2002 37
Figure 22: Percentage of U.S. Air Force Academy Preparatory School Graduates Accepting U.S. Air Force Academy Appointments for Preparatory School Academic Years 1993 through 2002 38
Figure 23: Percentage of Four Target Groups of U.S. Air Force Academy Preparatory School Graduates Accepting U.S. Air Force Academy Appointments for Preparatory School Academic Years 1993 through 2002 39
Figure 24: Percentage of U.S. Military Academy Preparatory School Graduates Accepting U.S. Military Academy Appointments for Preparatory School Academic Years 1993 through 2002 40
Figure 25: Percentage of Four Target Groups of U.S. Military Academy Preparatory School Graduates Accepting U.S. Military Academy Appointments for Preparatory School Academic Years 1993 through 2002 41
Figure 26: Percentage of U.S. Naval Academy Preparatory School Graduates Accepting U.S. Naval Academy Appointments for Preparatory School Academic Years 1993 through 2002 42
Figure 27: Percentage of Four Target Groups of U.S. Naval Academy Preparatory School Graduates Accepting U.S. Naval Academy Appointments for Preparatory School Academic Years 1993 through 2002 43
Figure 28: Comparative U.S. Air Force Academy Graduation Rates for Preparatory School Academic Years 1993 through 1998 44
Figure 29: Comparative U.S. Military Academy Graduation Rates for Preparatory School Academic Years 1993 through 1998 45
Figure 30: Comparative U.S. Naval Academy Graduation Rates for Preparatory School Academic Years 1993 through 1998 46

Abbreviations

DOD	Department of Defense
GAO	General Accounting Office
OUSD/P&R	Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness

This is a work of the U.S. government and is not subject to copyright protection in the United States. It may be reproduced and distributed in its entirety without further permission from GAO. However, because this work may contain copyrighted images or other material, permission from the copyright holder may be necessary if you wish to reproduce this material separately.

GAO
Accountability * Integrity * Reliability

United States General Accounting Office
Washington, DC 20548

September 10, 2003

The Honorable Jerry Lewis
Chairman
The Honorable John P. Murtha
Ranking Minority Member
Subcommittee on Defense
Committee on Appropriations
House of Representatives

The U.S. Air Force Academy, the U.S. Military Academy, and the U.S. Naval Academy combined spend tens of millions of dollars each year to operate service academy preparatory schools, preparing about 700 students for admission to the service academies. The service academies are one of several sources of newly commissioned officers, and they are solely responsible for sending students to the academy preparatory schools. The service academies receive more than 10,000 applications each year. Academy admissions officials screen all applicants and identify those who they believe could succeed at the academies but who would benefit from more preparation. The preparatory schools provide an alternative avenue for these applicants to gain admission to the academies. The Department of Defense (DOD) pays the full cost of providing academic preparation, military orientation, and physical conditioning. In fiscal year 2002, DOD reported that costs per graduate for the U.S. Air Force Academy Preparatory School, the U.S. Military Academy Preparatory School, and the U.S. Naval Academy Preparatory School were $30,842, $41,859, and $40,850, respectively.

The House report on defense appropriations for fiscal year 2003 directed that we review the three service academies and their preparatory schools.[1] As part of our review of the service academies, we reviewed DOD oversight and admissions issues at all three service academies. We also surveyed all students and faculty at the three academies to obtain their perceptions of various aspects of student life at the academies. Based on our review of the service academies, we recommended that the Secretary of Defense, in concert with the services, enhance performance goals and measures to improve oversight of the academies' operations and

[1] H.R. Rept. 107-532, at 14-15 (2002).

performance. These issues are addressed in separate reports.[2] This report addresses our review of all three service academy preparatory schools. As agreed with your offices, we assessed (1) the adequacy of the current mission statements of the preparatory schools, (2) the effectiveness of the preparatory schools in accomplishing their missions, and (3) the effectiveness of DOD oversight of the preparatory schools.

In addition to interviewing officials at all three preparatory schools, the academies, the service headquarters, and DOD's Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (OUSD/P&R), we reviewed the adequacy of the preparatory schools' mission statements and pertinent DOD guidance. To assess the effectiveness of the preparatory schools in accomplishing their missions, we analyzed aggregate preparatory school performance data for preparatory school academic years 1993 through 2002 for four target groups of students common to all preparatory schools: (1) enlisted personnel, (2) minorities, (3) recruited athletes, and (4) women. Our analysis included preparatory school admissions and graduation data for each target group. We also reviewed DOD guidance on oversight roles, responsibilities, and reporting requirements, as well as academy regulations and instructions. We conducted our review between February and July 2003. Further details on our scope and methodology are in appendix I.

Results in Brief

The three preparatory schools' current mission statements do not clearly articulate the purpose for which the schools are being used by their respective service academies. This lack of clarity in mission statements is a continuing problem, which we first reported on in 1992.[3] Although the three preparatory schools exist to help the service academies meet their

[2] U.S. General Accounting Office, *Military Education: DOD Needs to Enhance Performance Goals and Measures to Improve Oversight of Military Academies*, GAO-03-1000 (Washington, D.C.: September 2003) and *Military Education: Student and Faculty Perceptions of Student Life at the Military Academies*, GAO-03-1001 (Washington, D.C.: September 2003).

[3] U.S. General Accounting Office, *DOD Service Academies: Academy Preparatory Schools Need a Clearer Mission and Better Oversight*, GAO/NSIAD-92-57 (Washington, D.C.: Mar. 13, 1992).

diversity needs,[4] their mission statements simply refer to preparing "selected personnel who meet special needs," "selected candidates," or "candidates" for admission to and success at the service academies. These mission statements are not clearly aligned with DOD guidance, which states that primary consideration for preparatory school enrollment shall be accorded to nominees to fill officer objectives for three target groups: (1) enlisted personnel, (2) minorities, and (3) women.[5] Senior service academy officials told us that their expectations of the preparatory schools to provide students in these three groups are consistent with DOD guidance, and that they also rely on the preparatory schools to meet their needs for a fourth group—recruited athletes. Without clear mission statements, the service academies and their respective preparatory schools cannot establish performance goals that fully reflect the preparatory schools' intended purpose.

It is difficult to evaluate how effective the preparatory schools have been in accomplishing their missions because the service academies have not established performance goals for their preparatory schools. The preparatory schools collect a substantial amount of performance data for the four target groups. However, without specific performance goals, the service academies do not have an objective yardstick against which to gauge preparatory school effectiveness, as would be consistent with the principle of best practices for ensuring optimal return on investment.

The effectiveness of DOD, military service, and service academy oversight is limited because the existing oversight framework for assessing preparatory school performance does not include performance goals and measures. DOD, the services, and the service academies largely conduct oversight activities without the benefit of quantified performance goals and measures to assess how well the preparatory schools are preparing targeted groups of students for admission to and success at the service academies. DOD and the services receive annual reports from the academies—which have direct oversight responsibility for the preparatory schools—on preparatory school performance. While the data within these

[4] Preparatory school officials define the word "diversity" to be inclusive of enlisted personnel, minorities, recruited athletes, and women. Senior academy officials stated that they do not need to target women for enrollment at the preparatory schools, but they continue to do so in order to provide an environment comparable to the environment that students will encounter at the academies.

[5] Department of Defense, Directive 1322.22, *Service Academies*, § 4.9.2, August 24, 1994.

reports provide perspective on current performance compared with past performance, without stated performance goals and measures, these data do not offer DOD, the services, or the service academies as good an insight into the preparatory schools' performance and return on investment as they could. For example, the data reported by the preparatory schools show that fewer than 60 percent of the students who were admitted to the preparatory schools during the past 10 years graduated from or are still attending the academies; however, there is no stated goal for graduation rates against which to assess this rate. Other data reported by the preparatory schools show that the percentage of students in the target groups admitted to the preparatory schools has varied over the past 10 years; however, there are no stated goals against which to measure the adequacy of these admission trends.

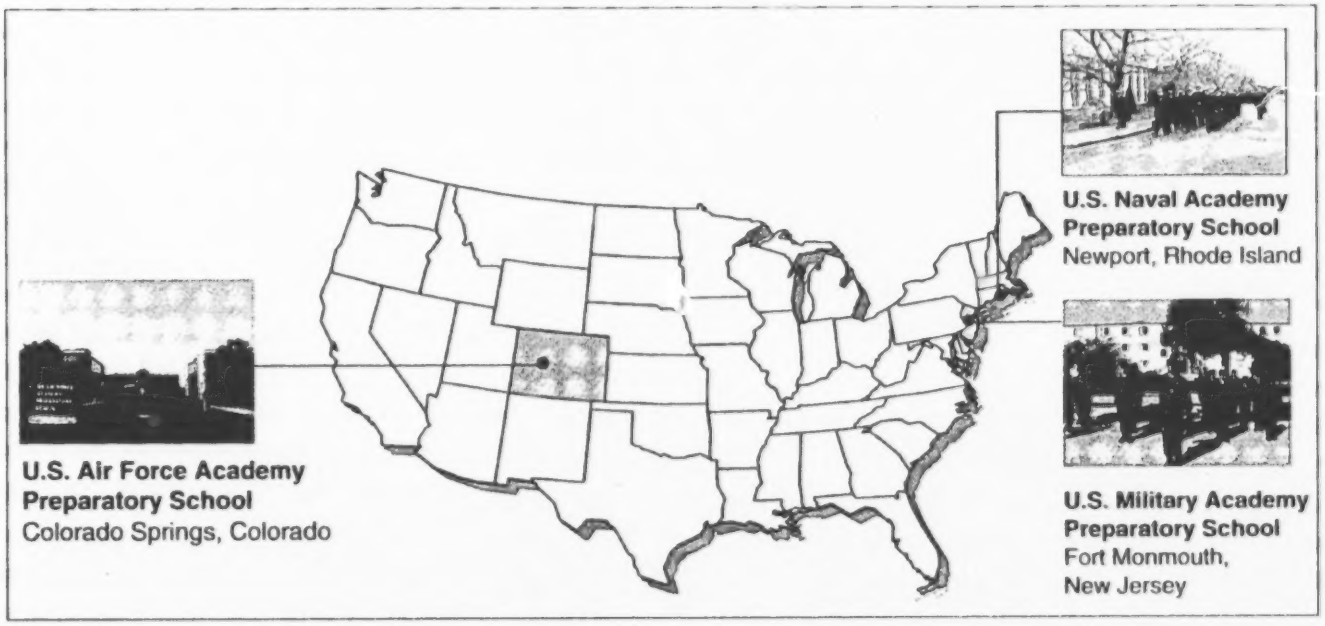
This report contains recommendations that DOD, in concert with the service headquarters and service academies, clarify the preparatory schools' mission statements by aligning these statements with the department's directive and the service academies' expectations that target student groups for primary enrollment consideration; establish quantified performance goals and measures, linked with the schools' mission statements; and enhance the existing oversight framework by using quantified performance goals and measures to objectively evaluate the performance of the preparatory schools. In commenting on a draft of this report, DOD concurred with our recommendations.

Background

Each service academy operates its own preparatory school. The U.S. Air Force Academy Preparatory School is co-located with the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado. The U.S. Military Academy Preparatory School is located at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey, and the U.S. Naval Academy Preparatory School is located in Newport, Rhode Island. [6] (See fig 1.)

[6] In addition to the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland, some students attending the U.S. Naval Academy Preparatory School also go on to attend the U.S. Coast Guard Academy in New London, Connecticut, or the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy in Kings Point, New York.

Figure 1: Service Academies' Preparatory School Locations



Sources: DOD and GAO.

During World War I, the Secretaries of the Army and the Navy nominated enlisted personnel to their respective service academies. Many of the first enlisted personnel did poorly on service academy entrance examinations, and many of the slots that were created for them went unfilled. To coach enlisted nominees for service academy entrance examinations, Army and Navy officials formally established the Military Academy and Naval Academy preparatory schools in 1946 and 1920, respectively. (The U.S. Air Force Academy was created in 1954, and its preparatory school in 1961.) The preparatory schools have evolved over the years and become more diverse. Today, the student bodies of these schools consist of enlisted personnel, minorities, recruited athletes, and women (see table 1).

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Table 1: Demographics for Preparatory Schools, Class of 2002

	U.S. Air Force Academy Preparatory School	U.S. Military Academy Preparatory School	U.S. Naval Academy Preparatory School
Total enrollment	**225**	**227**	**315**
Enlisted personnel	43	56	96
Minorities	111	104	173
Recruited athletes	90	59	87
Women	40	41	47

Source: GAO analysis of DOD data.

Notes: The population target groups are not mutually exclusive. Therefore, the sum of enrollment figures provided by target group will be greater than the total enrollment figure provided for each preparatory school.

Preparatory school classes of 2002 should graduate from the academies in 2006.

To be admitted to a preparatory school, an applicant must meet basic eligibility requirements. Because applicants to the academies must (1) be unmarried, (2) be a U.S. citizen, (3) be at least 17 years of age and must not have passed their twenty-third birthday on July 1 of the year they enter an academy, (4) have no dependents, and (5) be of good moral character, the preparatory schools apply the same requirements.[7]

The preparatory schools do not charge for tuition. The enlisted personnel who are selected to attend the preparatory schools are reassigned to the preparatory schools as their duty stations, and these enlisted personnel continue to be paid at the grades they earned before enrolling. Civilians who are selected to attend the preparatory schools enlist in the reserves and are paid about $700 per month. Enlisted personnel must complete their military obligations if they do not complete the programs or go on to one of the academies. Civilian students do not incur any financial or further military obligation if they do not complete the programs or go on to one of the academies. However, they also do not accrue any transferable college credits while attending the preparatory schools.

The preparatory schools offer a 10-month course of instruction that combines academic instruction, physical conditioning, and an orientation to military life. The daily schedule includes several hours of classroom instruction, mandatory study time, and extra instruction; time for athletics

[7] 10 U.S.C. §§ 4346, 6958, and 9346; and DOD Directive 1322.22 § 4.3.

or physical training; and some instruction in military customs and practices. Emphasis is placed on giving each candidate as much tutorial assistance as is necessary to maximize the individual's potential for success. The student body at each school is organized into a military unit with a student chain of command that is advised by commissioned and noncommissioned officers. This structure is intended to provide the students with exposure to military discipline and order.

In fiscal year 2002, DOD reported that the total cost to operate all three preparatory schools was about $22 million (see table 2). We did not independently verify or evaluate these costs.

Table 2: Service Academy Preparatory School Operating Costs and Cost per Graduate, Fiscal Years 1999-2002

Academy preparatory school	Cost category	FY 1999	FY 2000	FY 2001	FY 2002
U.S. Air Force Academy Preparatory School	Total operating costs	$6,381,169	$5,385,619	$5,628,625	$5,459,059
	Cost per graduate	36,673	32,057	30,425	30,842
U.S. Military Academy Preparatory School	Total operating costs	6,544,277	6,993,648	7,087,020	7,325,311
	Cost per graduate	34,263	35,144	38,727	41,859
U.S. Naval Academy Preparatory School	Total operating costs	7,212,997	8,136,649	8,549,809	9,395,421
	Cost per graduate	35,015	43,982	42,117	40,850

Source: DOD.

OUSD/P&R, the service headquarters, and the service academies have established clear roles and responsibilities for oversight of the preparatory schools. According to DOD Directive 1322.22 (*Service Academies*), the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness has responsibility to assess the operations and establish policy and guidance for uniform oversight and management of the service academies and their preparatory schools.[8] The service headquarters perform their oversight over their respective academies and preparatory schools in accordance with the directive. The superintendent of each academy reports directly to the uniformed head of his respective service (the Chiefs of Staff for the Army and the Air Force and the Chief of Naval Operations for the Navy), in accordance with the chain of command for each service. The academies perform the primary DOD oversight function for their respective preparatory schools. The commanding officers at the Air Force and Army

[8] DOD Directive 1322.22 §§ 5.1 and 6.2.

preparatory schools hold the rank of colonel, and the head of the Navy's preparatory school holds the equivalent rank of captain. They report directly to the superintendent of their respective service academies, in accordance with the chain of command for each service.

Appendix II provides general information about the three service academy preparatory schools.

Preparatory School Missions Are Not Clearly Defined

The three preparatory schools' current mission statements do not clearly define the purpose for which the schools are being used by their respective service academies. Mission statements should define an organization's purpose in language that states desired outcomes. Mission statements also bring the organization's vision into focus, explain why it exists, and tell what it does. Without a clear mission statement, the organization cannot establish goals that fully reflect the organization's intended purpose.

Although the preparatory schools exist to help the service academies meet their diversity needs, the schools' mission statements simply refer to preparing "selected personnel who meet special needs," "selected candidates," or "candidates" for admission to and success at the service academies. These mission statements are not clearly aligned with DOD guidance,[9] which states that primary consideration for enrollment shall be accorded to nominees to fill officer objectives for three target groups: (1) enlisted personnel, (2) minorities, and (3) women. Senior academy officials told us that their expectations of the preparatory schools are consistent with DOD guidance on enrollment objectives and that they also rely on the preparatory schools to meet their needs for a fourth group—recruited athletes—adding that the service academies would not be able to meet their diversity needs if the preparatory schools did not exist. However, neither DOD nor the service academies have required the preparatory schools to align their mission statements to reflect DOD's guidance and the service academies' expectations. As a result, none of the mission statements are explicit about the preparatory schools' intended purpose. Table 3 presents more detailed information on the preparatory schools' mission statements.

[9] DOD Directive 1322.22 § 4.9.2.

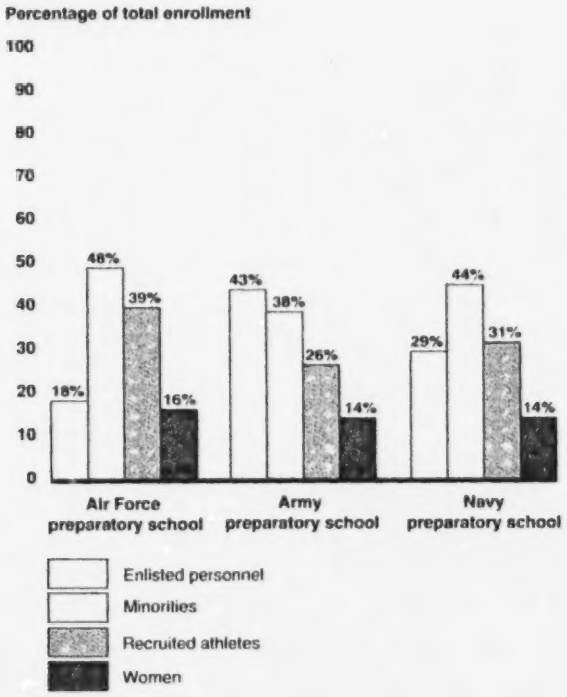
Table 3: Preparatory School Mission Statements

Service academy preparatory school	Mission statement
Air Force	To prepare, motivate, and evaluate for admission to and success at the Air Force Academy **selected personnel who meet the special needs** of the Air Force.
Army	To provide academic, military, and physical instruction in a moral-ethical military environment to prepare and motivate **candidates** for success at the U.S. Military Academy.
Navy	To prepare **selected candidates** morally, mentally, and physically, with emphasis on strengthening the academic foundation of individual candidates for officer accession through the U.S. Naval, Coast Guard, and Merchant Marine Academies.

Source: Service academy preparatory schools.

Even though the mission statements are not explicit about the schools' intended purpose, data on the number of students belonging to target groups who enter the preparatory schools and then enter the service academies indicate that, in practice, the schools are giving primary consideration for enrollment to those target groups identified by the DOD directive and the service academies—namely, enlisted personnel, minorities, recruited athletes, and women—and are primarily preparing those student groups for admission to the service academies. Preparatory school and service academy admissions data over a 10-year period indicate that the preparatory schools are a source for the academies of target groups—enlisted personnel, minorities, recruited athletes, and women—identified by DOD guidance and service academy officials. Average admissions data on the representation of targeted groups in the preparatory schools for preparatory school academic years 1993 through 2002 are shown in figure 2. (Appendix III contains detailed enrollment figures, by target group, for each of the preparatory schools.) Figure 3 shows the average percentage of each targeted group enrolled at the service academies that came from the preparatory schools for the same time period.

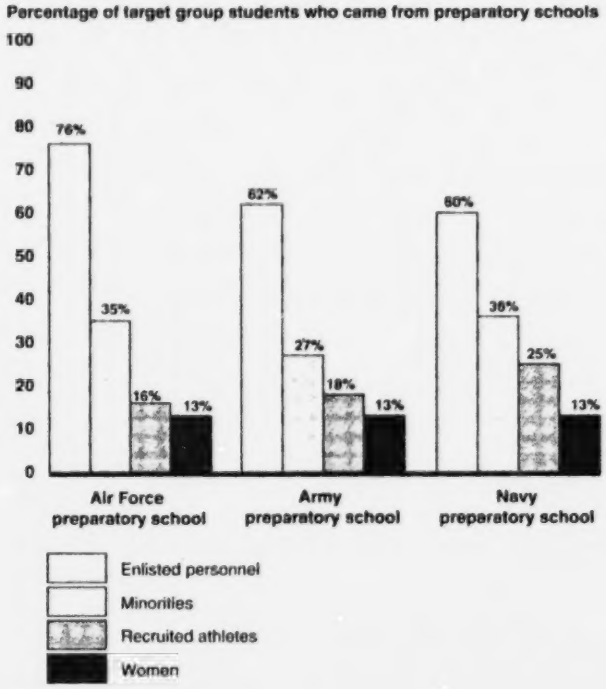
Figure 2: Average Preparatory School Enrollment, by Target Group, for Preparatory School Academic Years 1993 through 2002



Source: GAO analysis of DOD data.

Note: The population target groups are not mutually exclusive. Therefore, percentages may total more than 100.

Figure 3: Average Service Academy Target Group Enrollment, by Academy Preparatory School, for Preparatory School Academic Years 1993 through 2002



Source: GAO analysis of DOD data.

We first identified this lack of clarity in mission statements in our 1992 report on the preparatory schools. In the 1992 report, we concluded that the preparatory schools' missions were not clearly defined and that the preparatory schools appeared to be pursuing somewhat differing goals for the target groups of enlisted personnel, minorities, recruited athletes, and women—the primary groups the schools served at that time. We recommended that the Secretary of Defense determine what role the preparatory schools should play among the services' officer production programs and direct the services to clarify their school missions accordingly. To address this lack of clarity, DOD indicated that it planned to work with the services to develop a consistent mission statement for these schools that would be approved by May 1992. As discussed previously, however, the preparatory schools' current mission statements still do not clearly define the purpose for which the schools are being used by their respective service academies.

Preparatory Schools Maintain Performance Data, but Mission Effectiveness Is Difficult to Evaluate

It is difficult to evaluate how effective the preparatory schools have been in accomplishing their missions because the service academies have not established performance goals for their preparatory schools. The service academies rely on the preparatory schools to meet their targeted needs for enlisted personnel, minorities, recruited athletes, and women. The preparatory schools collect a substantial amount of performance data for these targeted groups. However, without mission-linked performance goals and measures, the service academies cannot objectively and formally assess these data to determine mission effectiveness. Without specific performance goals, there is no objective yardstick against which to gauge preparatory school effectiveness, as would be consistent with the principle of best practices for ensuring optimal return on investment.

With performance goals against which to compare actual performance, an organization can gauge how effectively it is meeting its mission. To assess effectiveness in achieving its mission, an organization should

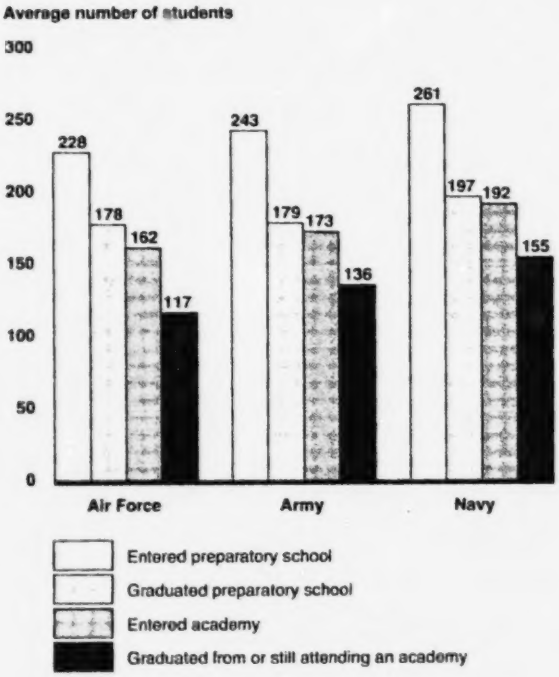
- establish performance goals to define the level of performance to be achieved by a program;
- express such goals in an objective, quantifiable, and measurable form;
- provide a basis to compare actual program results with performance goals; and
- report assessment results, including actions needed to achieve unmet goals or make programs minimally effective.

Preparatory Schools Collect Performance Data

The preparatory schools collect performance data, such as the number of students admitted to the schools, the types of students (enlisted personnel, minorities, recruited athletes, and women) admitted, and the number who entered and graduated from the academies. These descriptive data show, among other things, that during the past 10 years, an average of 76 percent of students enrolled at the preparatory schools graduated from them. Data for this same 10-year period show that a smaller percentage of all students admitted to the preparatory schools graduated from or are still attending the academies. For example, 51 percent of students who were admitted to the Air Force Academy preparatory school, 56 percent of students admitted to the Military Academy preparatory school, and 59 percent of students admitted to the Naval Academy preparatory school graduated from or are still attending their respective academies. Senior officials at the preparatory schools and academies stated that they are satisfied with these results.

Figure 4 shows the average number of students who entered the preparatory schools, graduated from the preparatory schools, entered the academies, and graduated from or are still attending the academies for preparatory school academic years 1993 through 2002.

Figure 4: Average Number of Students Admitted to the Preparatory Schools and Graduating from or Still Attending an Academy for Preparatory School Academic Years 1993 through 2002



Source: GAO analysis of DOD data.

Note: Preparatory school students who entered the academies after 1998 were still attending the academies at the time of this review.

Appendix IV provides more detailed information, for class totals and by target groups, on the percentage of students who entered the preparatory schools and graduated from or are still attending the academies between preparatory school academic years 1993 and 2002. Appendix V provides more detailed information, for class totals and target groups, on the percentage of students who graduated from the preparatory schools for that same time period. Appendix VI provides more detailed information,

for class totals and by target groups, on the percentage of preparatory school graduates who accepted appointments to the academies.

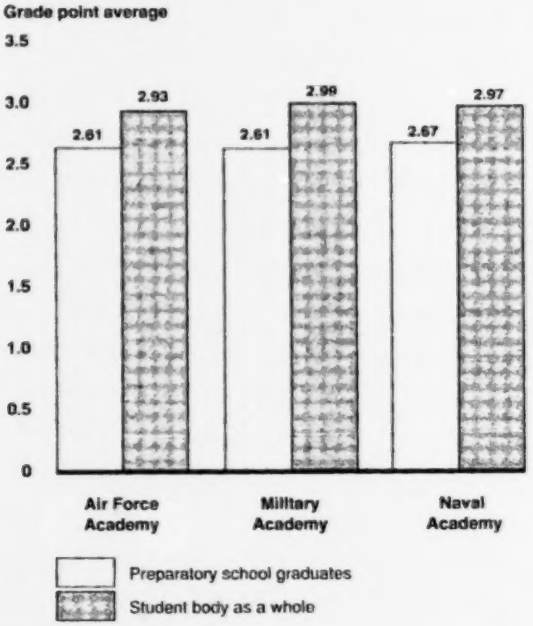
Service Academies Have Not Established Performance Goals

The service academies have not established quantified performance goals for their preparatory schools. However, they do have implicit expectations. Senior officials at both the preparatory schools and the academies told us that the preparatory schools are expected to enable preparatory school students to (1) meet the service academies' academic standards and (2) graduate from the service academies at rates comparable to the rates of students who received direct appointments to the service academies.

A 2.0 grade point average is the minimum level of academic performance accepted at the academies. Our analysis of academy data for the graduating class of 2002 shows that preparatory school graduates, as a group, exceeded the 2.0 grade point average but had slightly lower cumulative grade point averages than did the student body as a whole.[10] Figure 5 shows the cumulative grade point averages for preparatory school graduates and service academy student bodies as a whole for the class of 2002.

[10] Data refer to preparatory school graduates for class year 1998. These students graduated from the academies in 2002.

Figure 5: Comparison between Academy Grade Point Averages of Preparatory School Graduates and of Academy Student Bodies as a Whole for the Academy Class of 2002



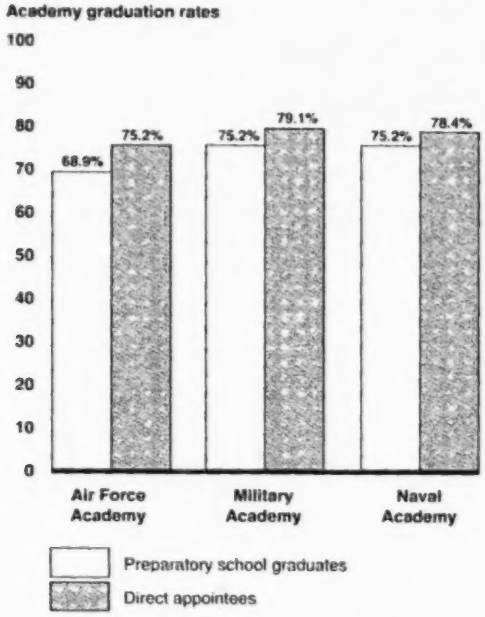
Source: GAO analysis of DOD data.

For preparatory school academic years 1993 through 1998, an average of 73 percent of preparatory school graduates who accepted appointments to the academies graduated from the service academies, while the average rate was 78 percent of students directly admitted to the academies for the same years.[11] Thus, graduation rates for preparatory school graduates were slightly lower than the rates for students directly admitted to the service academies. The academies, however, do not have a performance target for graduation rates for preparatory school graduates, and therefore these rates do not necessarily represent the achievement of a desired outcome. Figure 6 shows the average percentage of preparatory school students who graduated from the academies and the average percentage of directly appointed students who graduated from the academies for preparatory

[11] Preparatory school students who entered the academies after 1998 were still attending the academies at the time of this review. Therefore, 1998 is the last year in which academy graduation data were available for preparatory school students.

school academic years 1993 through 1998. Appendix VII provides more detailed information for comparative graduation rates for preparatory school academic years 1993 through 1998 for each preparatory school.

Figure 6: Comparison between Average Academy Graduation Rates of Preparatory School Graduates and of Direct Appointees for Preparatory School Academic Years 1993 through 1998



Source: GAO analysis of DOD data.

We first found that DOD had not established specific performance goals for the preparatory schools in our 1992 review on the service academy preparatory schools. In that report, we concluded that without such goals, DOD lacked the tools it needed to determine whether the schools were effective. DOD still has not required the academies to establish quantified performance goals that are clearly linked with the mission of the schools.

DOD Lacks a Complete Framework to Facilitate More Effective Oversight of the Preparatory Schools

The effectiveness of DOD, military service, and service academy oversight is limited because the existing oversight framework for assessing preparatory school performance does not include, among other things, performance goals and mission statements—as discussed in previous sections of this report—and objective measures against which to assess performance. An effective oversight framework includes tracking achievements in comparison with plans, goals, and objectives and analyzing the differences between actual performance and planned results. The interrelationship of these elements is essential for accountability and proper stewardship of government resources, and for achieving effective and efficient program results. Without formal goals and measures that are, moreover, linked to mission statements, oversight bodies do not have sufficient focus for their activities and cannot systematically assess an organization's strengths and weaknesses or identify appropriate remedies to achieve the best value for the investment in the organization.

OUSD/P&R, the services, and the service academies have established mechanisms to conduct oversight of the preparatory schools through DOD guidance established in 1994.[12] OUSD/P&R is required to assess and monitor the preparatory schools' operations based on the information provided in the annual reports it requires from the service secretaries.[13] The service headquarters are responsible for oversight for their respective academies and preparatory schools, and they oversee the schools' operations through the annual preparatory school reports that they submit to OUSD/P&R. These reports contain data on various aspects of preparatory school performance, such as student demographic trends, admissions trends, and attrition.

The service academies exercise direct oversight of their respective preparatory schools and monitor the schools' performance through ongoing collection of data required by OUSD/P&R. For example, each of the service academies collects preparatory school data such as the number of students admitted to the schools, the types of students (enlisted personnel, minorities, recruited athletes, and women) admitted, and the number who entered and graduated from the academies.

DOD, the service headquarters, and the service academies, through these annual assessment reports, are able to compare aspects of preparatory

[12] DOD Directive 1322.22.

[13] DOD Directive 1322.22 §§ 5.1.2 and 6.2.

school performance against prior period results. For example, service academy data show that over the past 10 years, 51 percent of students who were admitted to the Air Force Preparatory School, 56 percent of students admitted to the Military Academy Preparatory School, and 59 percent of students admitted to the Naval Academy Preparatory School graduated from or are still attending their respective academies. Other data reported by the preparatory schools show that the percentage of students in the target groups admitted to the schools has varied over the past 10 years. However, as mentioned in previous sections of this report, the preparatory schools lack quantified performance goals that are linked to clear mission statements. Without goals linked to clear mission statements, DOD, the service headquarters, and the service academies do not have an objective basis by which to judge the effectiveness of the preparatory schools' performance of their missions.

Conclusions

Although the service academy preparatory schools receive oversight from a number of organizations, they lack clear mission statements and quantified performance goals and measures. Thus, there is no objective yardstick against which to gauge preparatory school performance, consistent with the principle of best practices for ensuring optimal return on investment. This conclusion reiterates our 1992 report's finding that the preparatory schools lacked clear mission statements and that DOD lacked the tools necessary to determine whether the schools were effective.

Recommendations for Executive Action

We recommend that the Secretary of Defense direct the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, in concert with the service headquarters and service academies, to

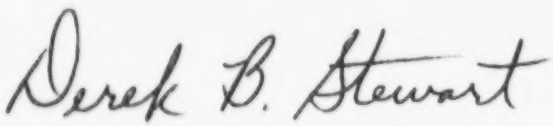
- clarify the preparatory schools' mission statements by aligning these statements with the department's guidance and the academies' expectations, which target student groups for primary enrollment consideration;
- establish quantified performance goals and measures, linked with the schools' mission statements; and
- enhance the existing oversight framework by using quantified performance goals and measures to objectively evaluate the performance of the preparatory schools.

Agency Comments

In commenting on a draft of this report, DOD concurred with our recommendations and indicated that the mission statements of the preparatory schools will be aligned with DOD guidance and service expectations and that quantitative goals will be established to create effective measures and appropriate standards for success. DOD added that the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness will review and analyze these statistics over time to ensure the successful performance of the preparatory schools. DOD's comments are reprinted in their entirety in appendix VIII.

We are sending copies of this report to the appropriate congressional committees; the Secretaries of Defense, the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force; and the Director, Office of Management and Budget. We will also make copies available to others upon request. In addition, the report will be available at no charge on the GAO Web site at http://www.gao.gov.

Please contact me on (202) 512-5559 if you or your staff have any questions concerning this report. Key contributors are listed in appendix IX.



Derek B. Stewart
Director
Defense Capabilities and Management

Appendix I: Scope and Methodology

To assess the adequacy of the mission statements of the preparatory schools, we interviewed officials at the following locations: the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, Washington, D.C.; the U.S. Air Force Academy, Washington Liaison Office, Washington, D.C.; Headquarters, Department of the Army, Personnel, Washington, D.C.; Headquarters, Department of the Navy, Office of Plans and Policy, Washington, D.C.; the U.S. Air Force Academy, Colorado Springs, Colorado; the U.S. Military Academy, West Point, New York.; the U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland; the U.S. Air Force Academy Preparatory School, Colorado Springs, Colorado; the U.S. Military Academy Preparatory School, Fort Monmouth, New Jersey; and the U.S. Naval Academy Preparatory School, Newport, Rhode Island. We obtained and reviewed Department of Defense (DOD), service, service academy, and academy preparatory school guidance, service academy strategic plans and instructions, and preparatory school annual reports on operations and performance. Using data provided to us by the preparatory schools, we analyzed aggregate data for preparatory school academic years 1993 through 2002, by class totals and by four groups of students—enlisted personnel, minorities, recruited athletes, and women—to ascertain the extent to which these four groups of students were being admitted to the preparatory schools; at what rates these four groups of students graduated from the preparatory schools and accepted appointments to the academies; and how well these four groups fared at the academies in comparison with their nonpreparatory school peers. We also reviewed relevant studies on the preparatory schools conducted by internal and external sources.

To evaluate the effectiveness of the preparatory schools in accomplishing their missions, we held discussions with senior service academy and preparatory school officials to determine what results they expected the preparatory schools to achieve, and we obtained their assessments of the schools' effectiveness. We reviewed and analyzed aggregate preparatory school performance data for preparatory school academic years 1993 through 2002. We reviewed and analyzed the preparatory schools' annual assessment reports, as well as other relevant data gathered from the academies and the preparatory schools. For class totals and for the four target groups of students at each of the preparatory schools, we analyzed

- the number and percentage of preparatory school students who entered and graduated from a preparatory school;
- the number and percentage of preparatory school graduates who accepted an appointment to an academy;

- the number and percentage of preparatory school graduates who accepted an appointment to an academy and then graduated from or are still attending an academy; and
- the number and percentage of the original preparatory school students who graduated from or are still attending an academy.

We did not independently assess data reliability, but we obtained assurances about data completeness, accuracy, and reliability from academy officials responsible for maintaining data for each preparatory school.

To assess the effectiveness of DOD oversight of the preparatory schools, we reviewed DOD guidance on oversight roles, responsibilities, and reporting requirements, as well as academy regulations and instructions, and discussed oversight activities with DOD, service, and service academy officials. Additionally, we reviewed criteria on the principles of effective management, such as those found in *Internal Control Standards: Internal Control Management and Evaluation Tool*.[1]

We conducted our review from February 2003 through July 2003 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

[1] U.S. General Accounting Office, *Internal Control Standards: Internal Control Management and Evaluation Tool*, GAO-01-1008G (Washington, D.C.: August 2001).

Appendix II: General Information about the Three Service Academy Preparatory Schools

	U.S. Air Force Academy Preparatory School	U.S. Military Academy Preparatory School	U.S. Naval Academy Preparatory School
Service	Air Force	Army	Navy, Marine Corps[a]
Location	Colorado Springs, Colorado (co-located with the U.S. Air Force Academy)	Fort Monmouth, New Jersey	Newport, Rhode Island
Curriculum	Math, English, Chemistry	Math, English, Success Development, Physical Education, Chemistry[b]	Math, English, Chemistry, Physics, Information Technology
Average enrollment[c]	228	243	261
Average graduation[c]	178	179	197
Faculty composition	About 35 percent civilian, 65 percent military instructors; 22 academic billets	About 30 percent military and 70 percent civilian instructors, 17 academic billets	1:1 ratio of military to civilian instructors, 34 academic billets
Academic year	10 months; four-quarter program	10 months; four-quarter program	10 months; three-trimester program

Source: Military service academies.

[a]In addition to the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland, some students attending the U.S. Naval Academy Preparatory School also go on to attend the U.S. Coast Guard Academy in New London, Connecticut, or the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy in Kings Point, New York.

[b]The Military Academy Preparatory School offers a voluntary chemistry course over the summer break following graduation.

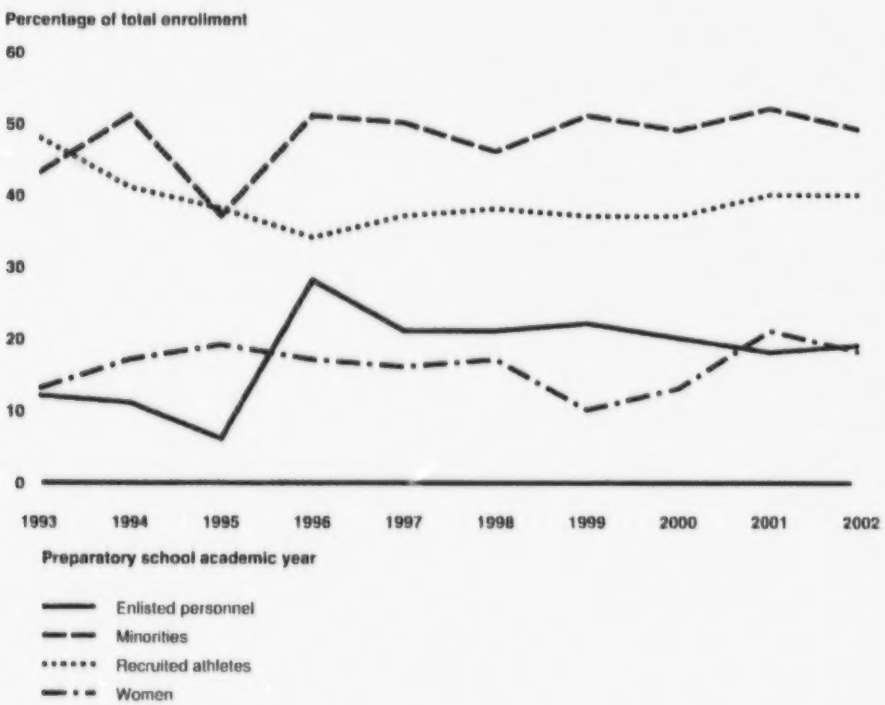
[c]Averages are based on 10 years of data covering preparatory school academic years 1993 through 2002.

Appendix III: Preparatory School Enrollment

U.S. Air Force Academy Preparatory School

Figure 7 shows the composition of each class of Air Force Academy Preparatory School enrollees over the past 10 years. Minorities are the largest target group at the school, averaging 48 percent of enrollment. The percentage of recruited athletes decreased from 1993 through 1996, and it has remained relatively constant since then at about 40 percent of enrollment. Enlisted personnel experienced the greatest change, constituting 12 percent of the student body in 1993, and peaking to 28 percent in 1996. Enlisted personnel averaged 18 percent of the enrolled class from 1993 through 2002.

Figure 7: Percentage of Total Enrollment, by Target Groups, at the U.S. Air Force Academy Preparatory School for Preparatory School Academic Years 1993 through 2002



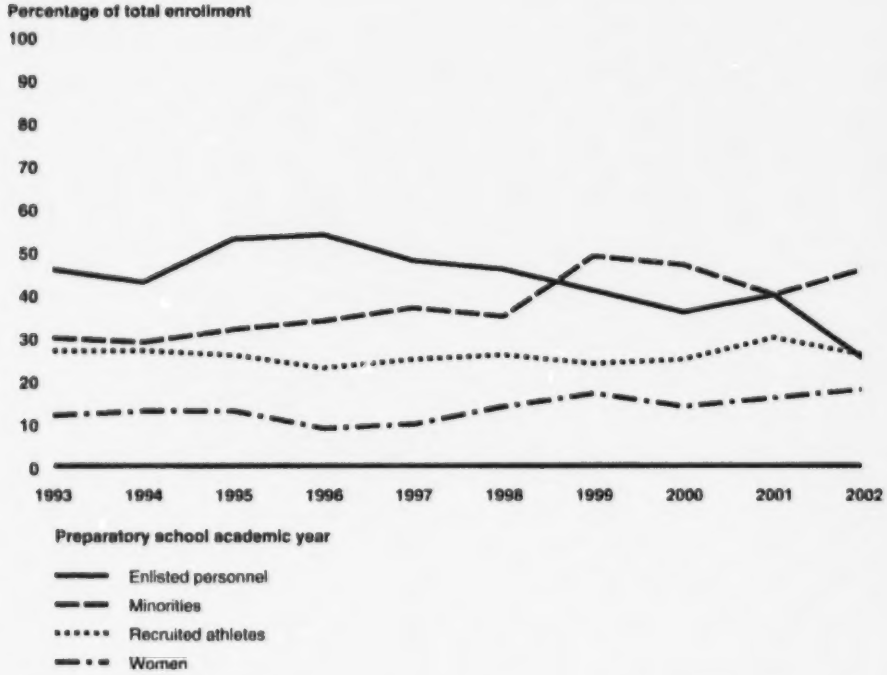
Source: GAO analysis of DOD data.

Note: The population target groups are not mutually exclusive. Therefore, percentages may total more than 100.

U.S. Military Academy Preparatory School

Since 1996 the percentage of enlisted personnel enrolled at the Military Academy Preparatory School has generally declined from a high of 54 percent in 1996 to a low of 25 percent in 2002. Concurrently, the enrollment of minorities has fluctuated between 29 and 49 percent. (See fig. 8.)

Figure 8: Percentage of Total Enrollment, by Target Groups, at the U.S. Military Academy Preparatory School for Preparatory School Academic Years 1993 through 2002



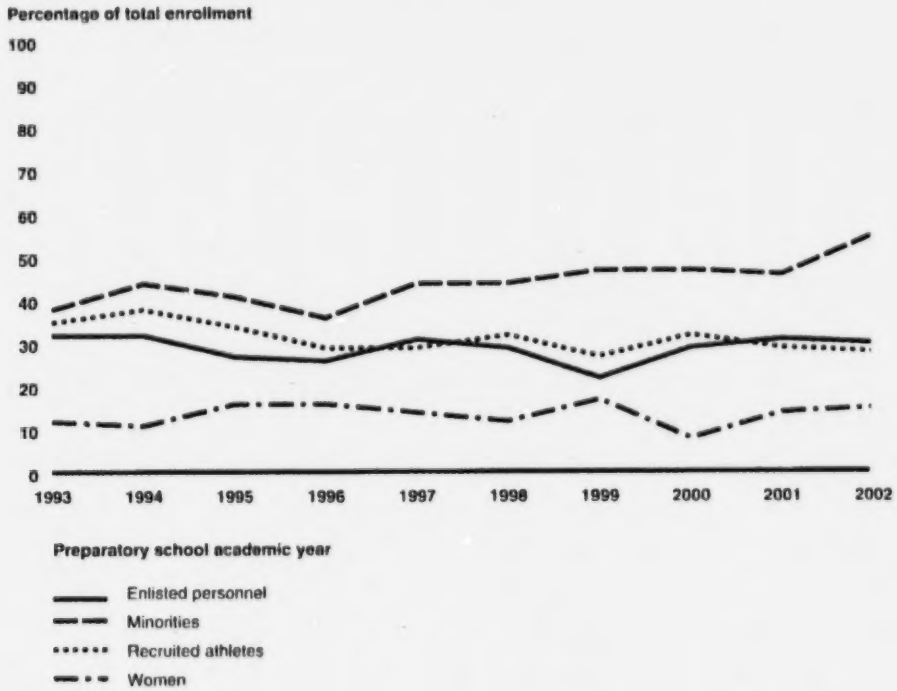
Source: GAO analysis of DOD data.

Note: The population target groups are not mutually exclusive. Therefore, percentages may total more than 100.

U.S. Naval Academy Preparatory School

The composition of each class of Naval Academy Preparatory School enrollees over the past 10 years is shown in figure 9. Minorities constituted the largest target group, averaging 44 percent from 1993 through 2002. Enlisted personnel made up, on average, 29 percent of the enrolled class, and recruited athletes made up, on average, 31 percent of the class.

Figure 9: Percentage of Total Enrollment, by Target Groups, at the U.S. Naval Academy Preparatory School for Preparatory School Academic Years 1993 through 2002



Source: GAO analysis of DOD data.

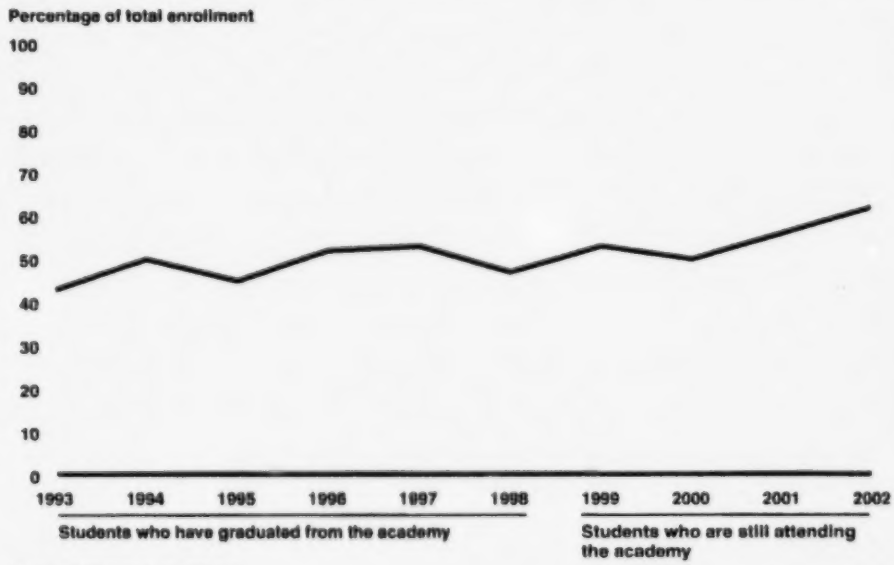
Note: The population target groups are not mutually exclusive. Therefore, percentages may total more than 100.

Appendix IV: Students Who Entered the Preparatory Schools and Graduated from or Are Still Attending the Academies

U.S. Air Force Academy Preparatory School

Figure 10 shows the percentage of all Air Force Academy Preparatory School students who graduated from or are still attending the Air Force Academy. From 1993 through 1998, academy graduation rates of Air Force Preparatory School students ranged from 43 percent to 53 percent.[1] Figure 11 shows the same data for each of the four target groups.

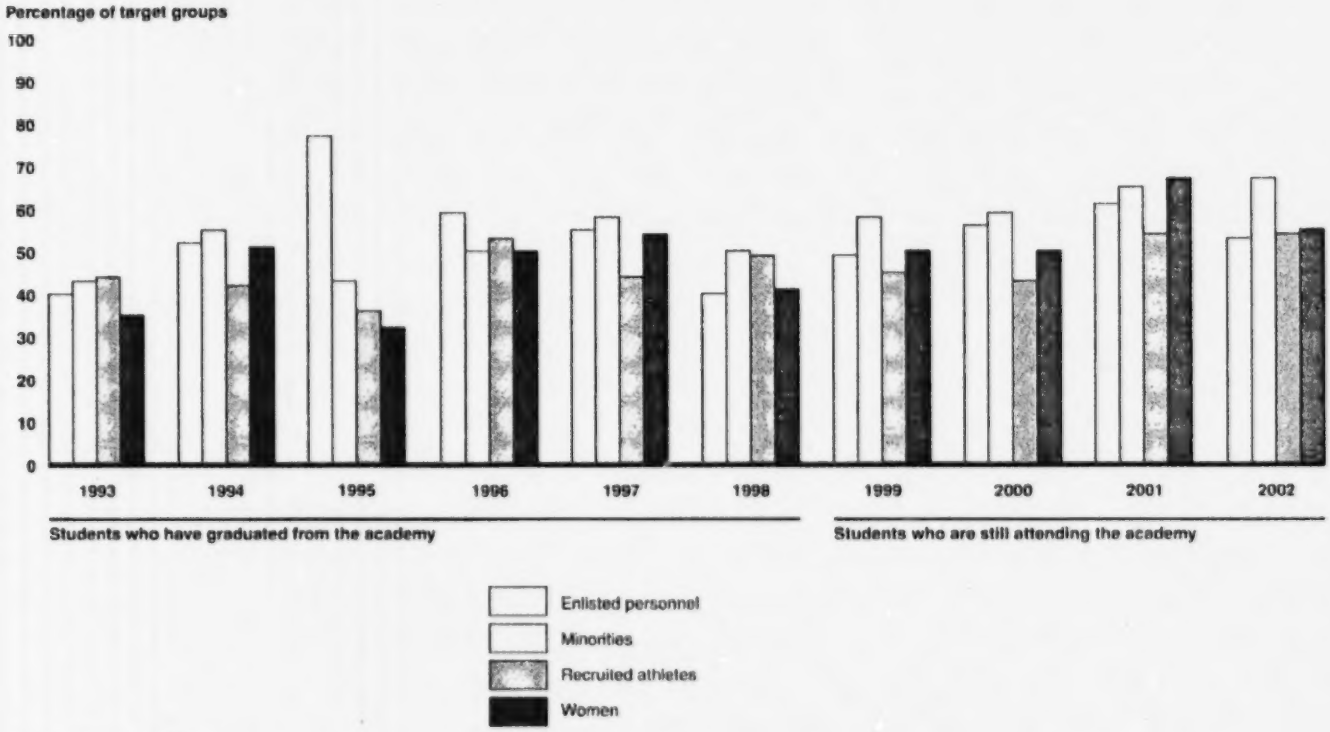
Figure 10: Percentage of Total U.S. Air Force Academy Preparatory School Enrollment Graduating from or Still Attending the U.S. Air Force Academy for Preparatory School Academic Years 1993 through 2002



Source: GAO analysis of DOD data.

[1] Preparatory school students who entered the academy after 1998 were still attending the academy at the time of this review.

Figure 11: Percentage of Four Target Groups Entering the U.S. Air Force Academy Preparatory School and Graduating from or Still Attending the U.S. Air Force Academy for Preparatory School Academic Years 1993 through 2002



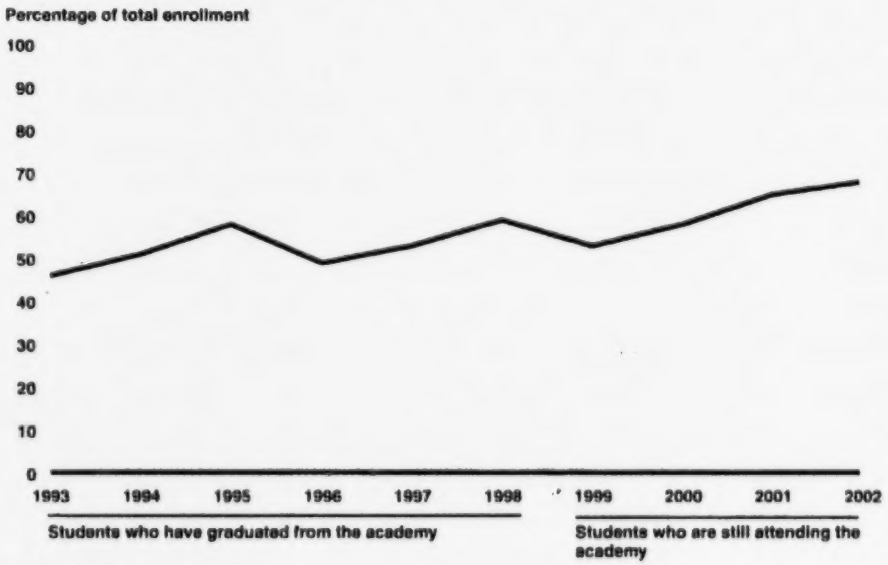
Source: GAO analysis of DOD data.

Note: Preparatory school students who entered the academy after 1998 were still attending the academy at the time of this review.

U.S. Military Academy Preparatory School

Figure 12 shows the percentage of all Army Preparatory School students who graduated from or are still attending the Military Academy. From 1993 through 1998, academy graduation rates of Army Preparatory School students ranged from 46 percent to 59 percent.[2] Figure 13 shows the same data for each of the four target groups.

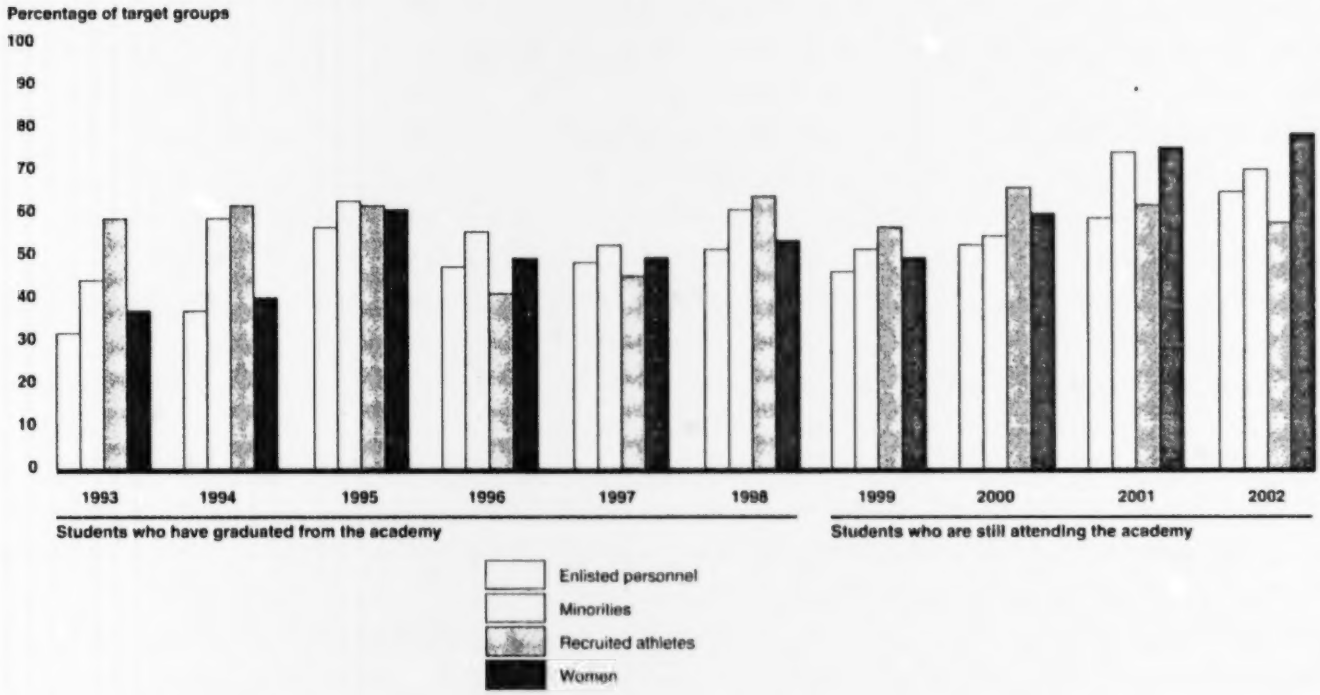
Figure 12: Percentage of Total U.S. Military Academy Preparatory School Enrollment Graduating from or Still Attending the U.S. Military Academy for Preparatory School Academic Years 1993 through 2002



Source: GAO analysis of DOD data.

[2] Preparatory school students who entered the academy after 1998 were still attending the academy at the time of this review.

Figure 13: Percentage of Four Target Groups Entering the U.S. Military Academy Preparatory School and Graduating from or Still Attending the U.S. Military Academy for Preparatory School Academic Years 1993 through 2002



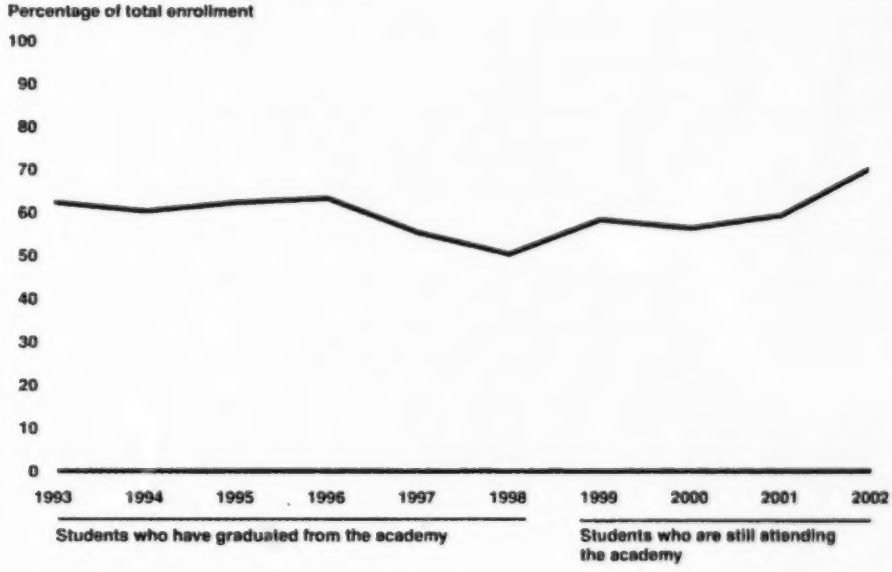
Source: GAO analysis of DOD data.

Note: Preparatory school students who entered the academy after 1998 were still attending the academy at the time of this review.

U.S. Naval Academy Preparatory School

Figure 14 shows the percentage of all Naval Academy Preparatory School students who graduated from or are still attending the Naval Academy. From 1993 through 1998, academy graduation rates of Naval Academy Preparatory School students ranged from 50 percent to 63 percent.[3] Figure 15 shows the same data for each of the four target groups.

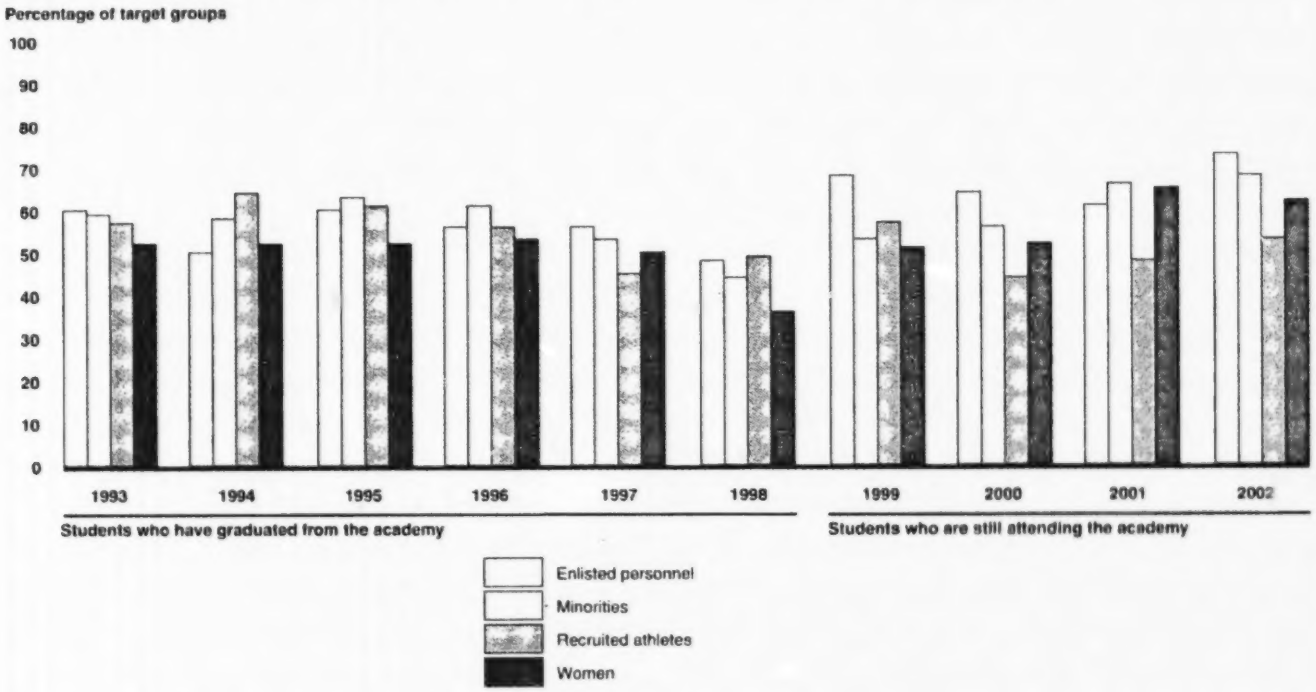
Figure 14: Percentage of Total U.S. Naval Academy Preparatory School Enrollment Graduating from or Still Attending the U.S. Naval Academy for Preparatory School Academic Years 1993 through 2002



Source: GAO analysis of DOD data.

[3] Preparatory school students who entered the academy after 1998 were still attending the academy at the time of this review.

Figure 15: Percentage of Four Target Groups Entering the U.S. Naval Academy Preparatory School and Graduating from or Still Attending the U.S. Naval Academy for Preparatory School Academic Years 1993 through 2002



Source: GAO analysis of DOD data.

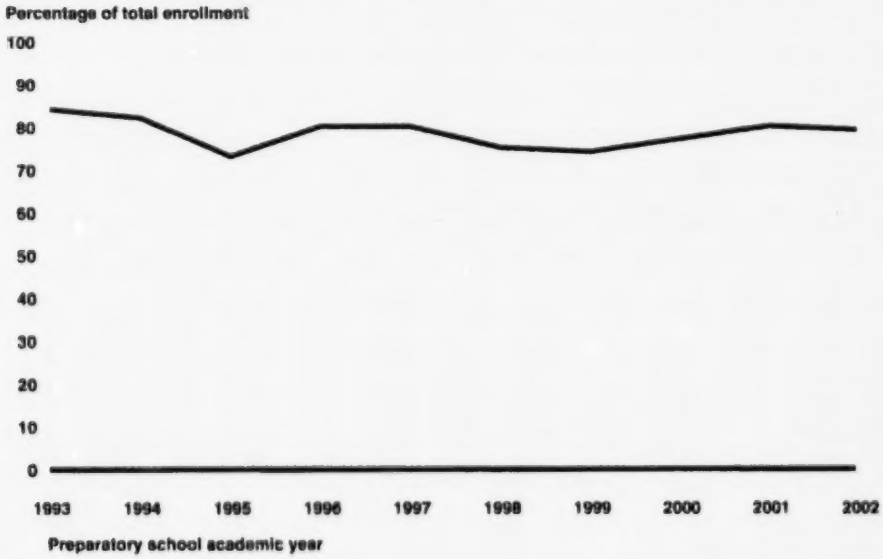
Note: Preparatory school students who entered the academy after 1998 were still attending the academy at the time of this review.

Appendix V: Students Who Entered the Preparatory Schools and Graduated from the Preparatory Schools

U.S. Air Force Academy Preparatory School

Figure 16 shows the graduation rates for the Air Force Academy Preparatory School. In 2002, 79 percent of the students enrolled in the U.S. Air Force Preparatory School graduated from the preparatory school. The graduation rate remained relatively constant, averaging 78 percent from 1993 through 2002.

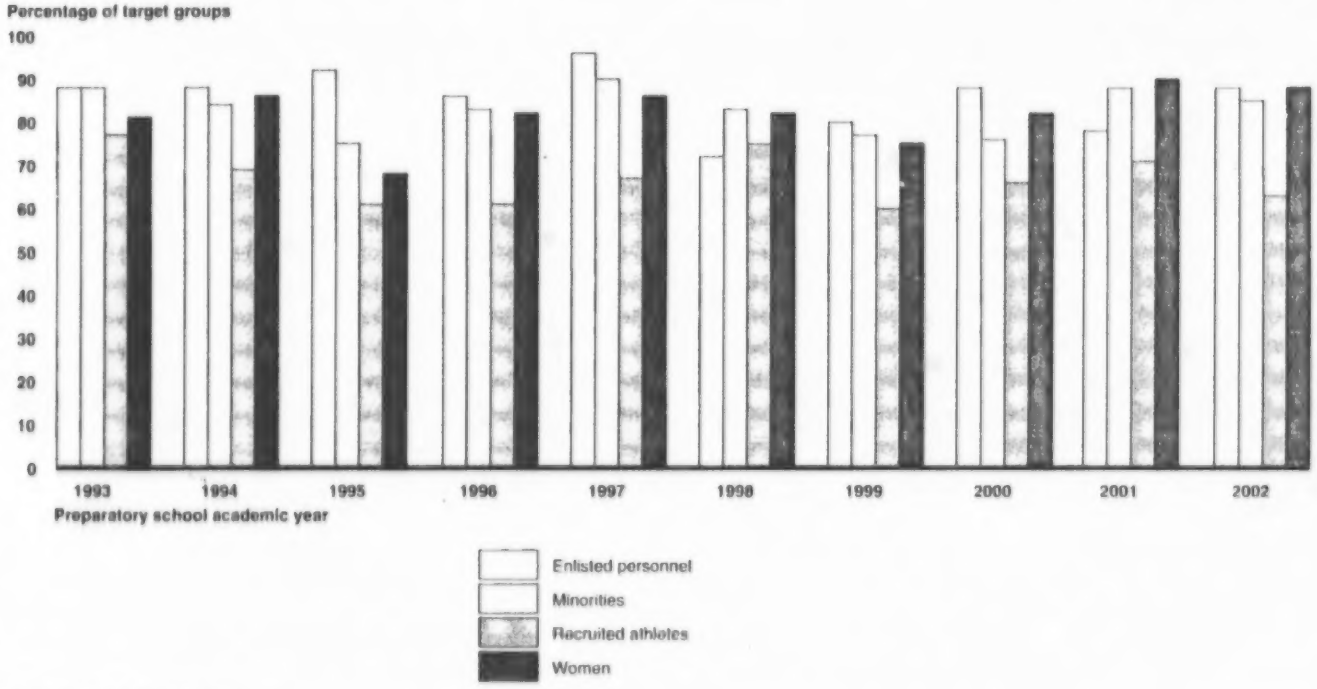
Figure 16: Percentage of Students Graduating from the U.S. Air Force Academy Preparatory School for Preparatory School Academic Years 1993 through 2002



Source: GAO analysis of DOD data.

Air Force preparatory school graduation rates by target group are shown in figure 17. Recruited athletes had the lowest graduation rates, averaging 67 percent over 10 years. Women and minorities had similar graduation rates over 10 years, both averaging 83 percent. Enlisted personnel had the highest graduation rate, averaging 85 percent over the past 10 years.

Figure 17: Percentage of Four Target Groups Graduating from the U.S. Air Force Academy Preparatory School for Preparatory School Academic Years 1993 through 2002

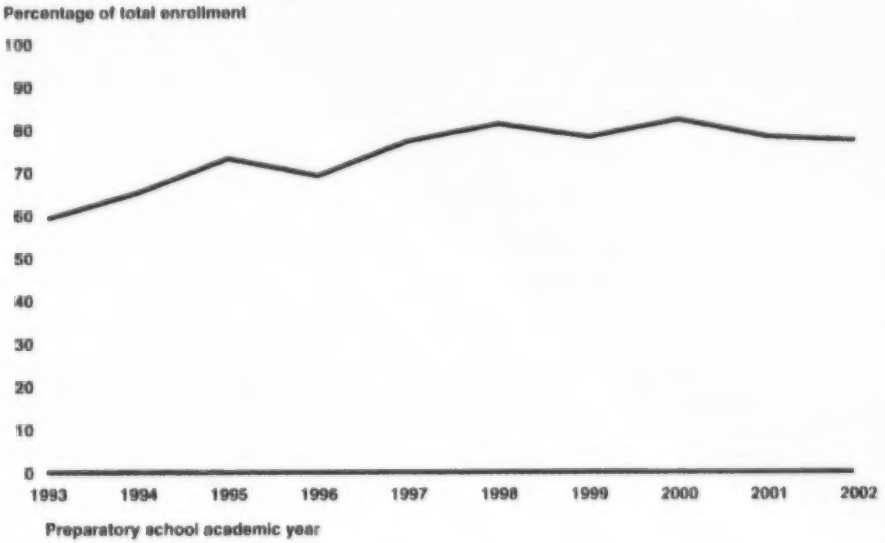


Source: GAO analysis of DOD data.

U.S. Military Academy Preparatory School

Figure 18 shows the trend in Army preparatory school graduation rates over the past 10 years. In 2002, 77 percent of students in the U.S. Military Academy Preparatory School graduated from the school. The graduation rate increased during the past 10 years, from a low of 59 percent in 1993 to a high of 82 percent in 2000, before declining slightly in both 2001 and 2002.

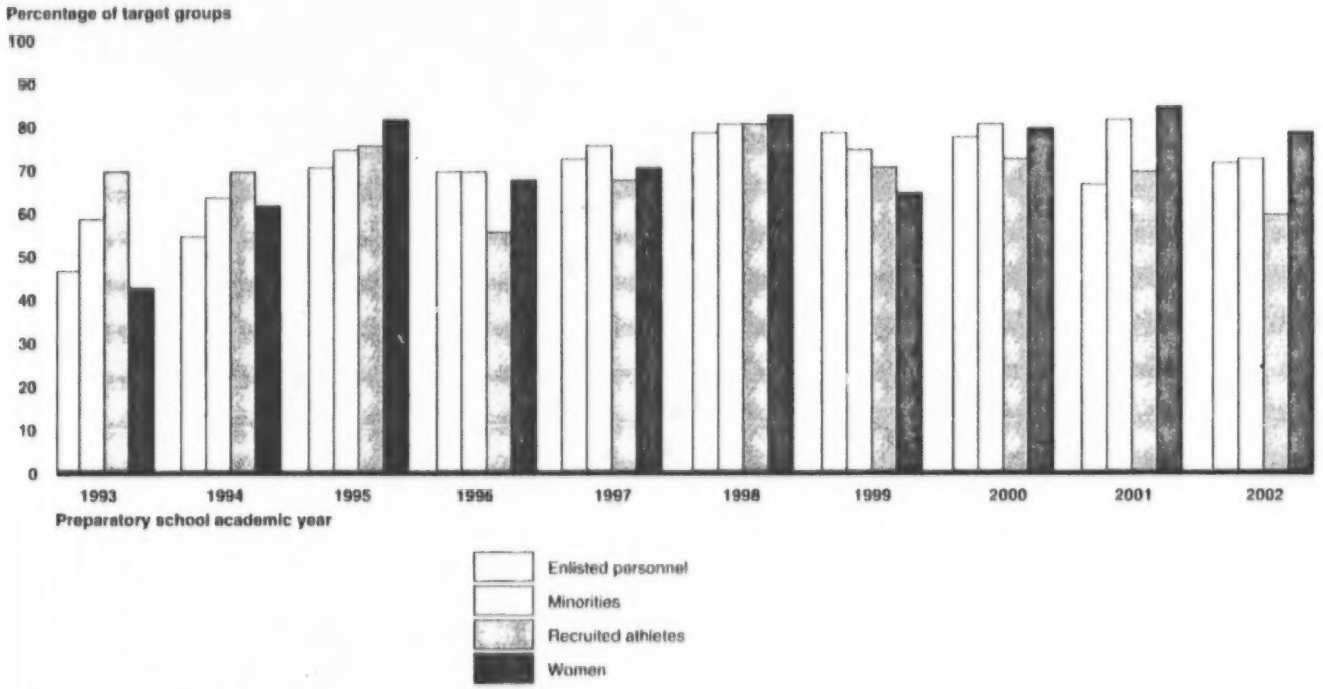
Figure 18: Percentage of Students Graduating from the U.S. Military Academy Preparatory School for Preparatory School Academic Years 1993 through 2002



Source: GAO analysis of DOD data.

Figure 19 shows the Army preparatory school graduation rates, by target group, over the past 10 years. The rate for women increased—in fact doubled—from a low of 42 percent in 1993 to a high of 84 percent in 2001. On average, minorities graduated at a higher rate—73 percent—than did the other target groups from 1993 through 2002. Enlisted personnel had the lowest graduation rate among the four target groups, averaging 67 percent over 10 years.

Figure 19: Percentage of Four Target Groups Graduating from the U.S. Military Academy Preparatory School for Preparatory School Academic Years 1993 through 2002

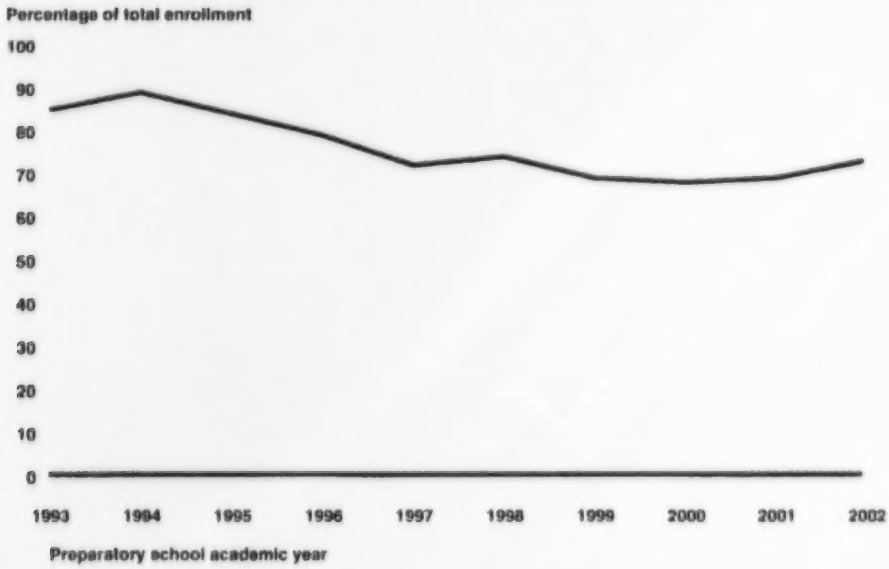


Source: GAO analysis of DOD data.

U.S. Naval Academy Preparatory School

Figure 20 shows the trend in overall graduation rates at the Navy preparatory school for the past 10 years. Graduation rates at the school generally declined until 2000, reaching a low of 68 percent in that year. The graduation rate increased in the last 2 years, reaching 73 percent in 2002. Graduation rates averaged 75 percent over the 10 years.

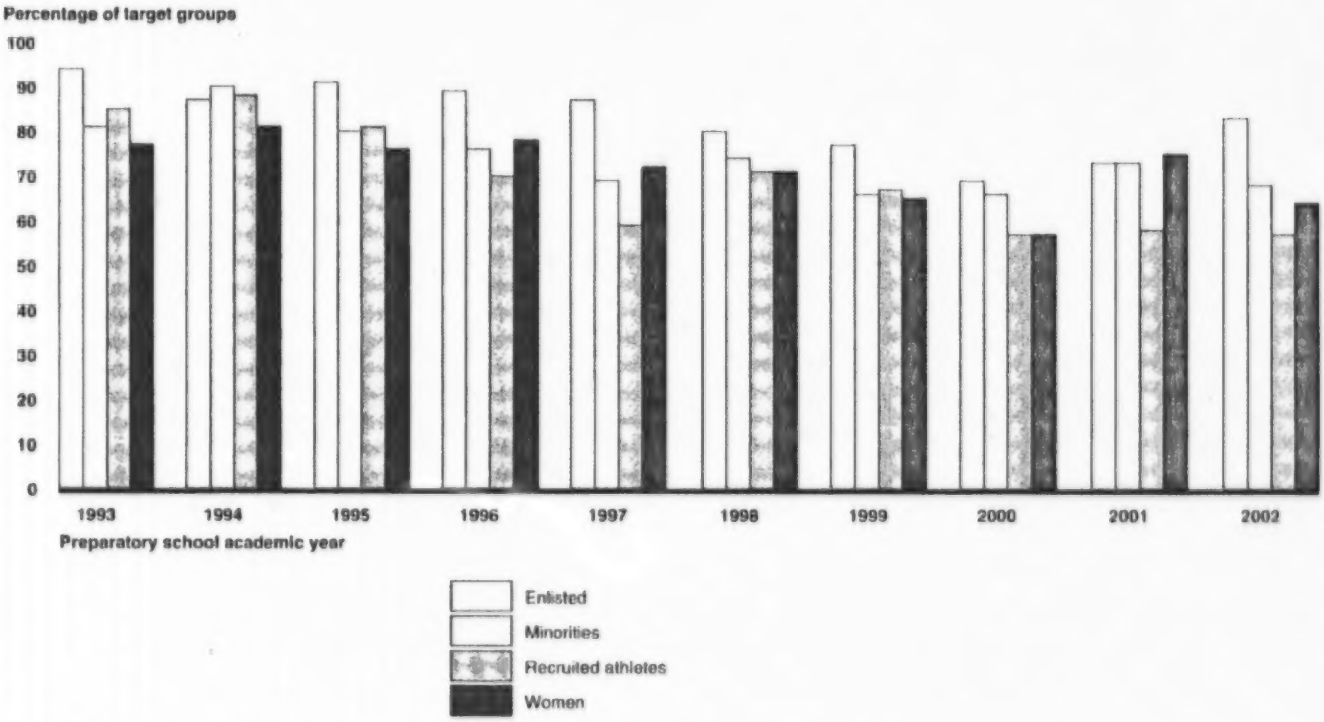
Figure 20: Percentage of Students Graduating from the U.S. Naval Academy Preparatory School for Preparatory School Academic Years 1993 through 2002



Source: GAO analysis of DOD data.

Figure 21 shows historical trends in Navy preparatory school graduation rates for target groups. Enlisted personnel had an average graduation rate of 83 percent, the highest among the target groups. Women and recruited athletes had lower graduation rates, both averaging 69 percent over 10 years. Graduation rates for minorities generally declined after peaking at 90 percent in 1994 and averaged 73 percent from 1993 to 2002.

Figure 21: Percentage of Four Target Groups Graduating from the U.S. Naval Academy Preparatory School for Preparatory School Academic Years 1993 through 2002



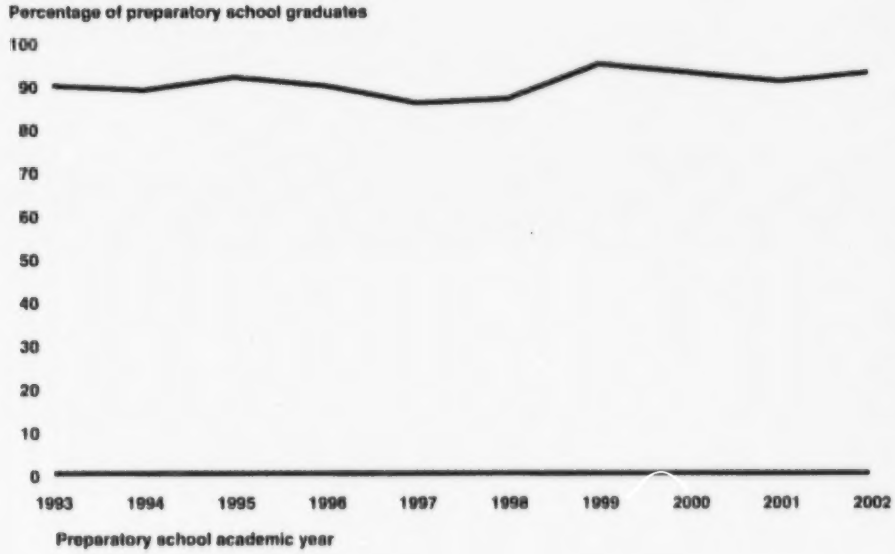
Source: GAO analysis of DOD data.

Appendix VI: Students Who Graduated from the Preparatory Schools and Accepted Appointments to the Academies

U.S. Air Force Academy Preparatory School

Figure 22 shows the percentage of Air Force preparatory school graduates who accepted appointments at the Air Force Academy. This percentage has remained relatively constant over the past 10 years. On average, 91 percent of the graduates accepted appointments to attend the Air Force Academy.

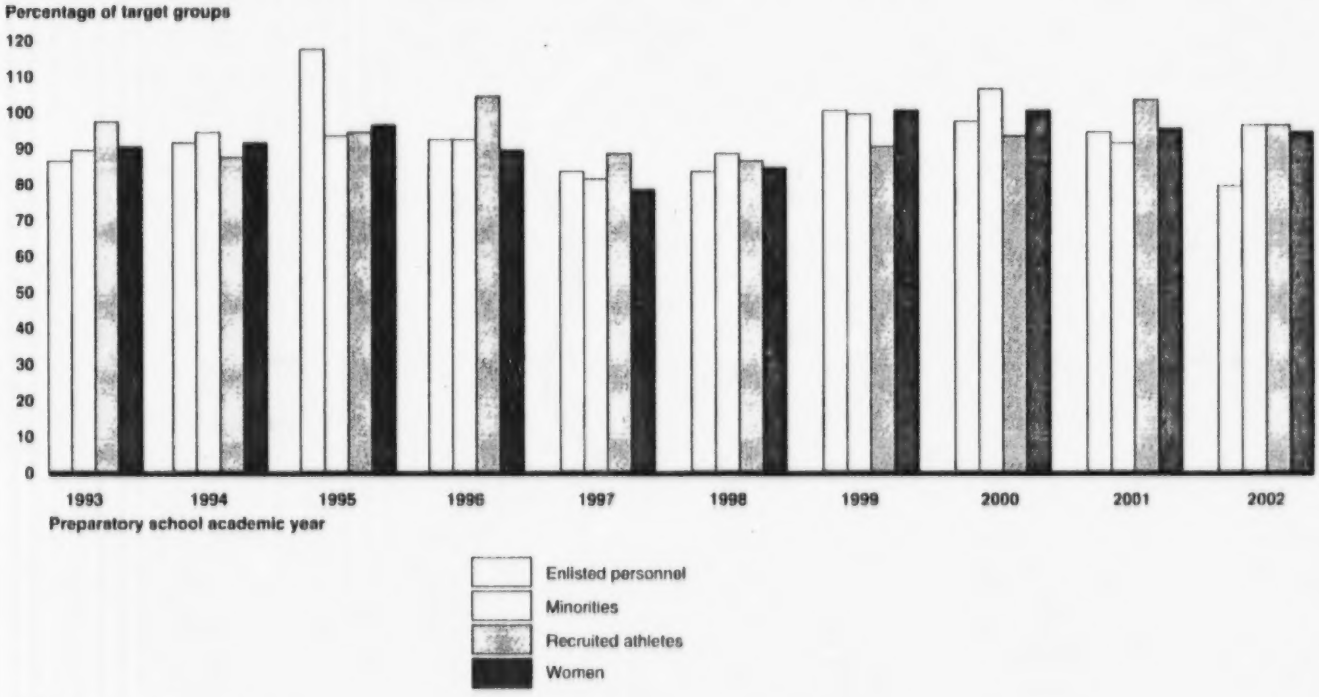
Figure 22: Percentage of U.S. Air Force Academy Preparatory School Graduates Accepting U.S. Air Force Academy Appointments for Preparatory School Academic Years 1993 through 2002



Source: GAO analysis of DOD data.

Figure 23 shows the percentage of Air Force preparatory school students in the four target groups–enlisted personnel, minorities, recruited athletes, and women–who accepted an appointment to the Air Force Academy. All four groups had similar acceptance rates of appointments for admission. For the past 10 years, of those who graduated, an average of 91 percent of enlisted personnel, 92 percent of minorities, 93 percent of recruited athletes, and 90 percent of women accepted an appointment to attend the Air Force Academy.

Figure 23: Percentage of Four Target Groups of U.S. Air Force Academy Preparatory School Graduates Accepting U.S. Air Force Academy Appointments for Preparatory School Academic Years 1993 through 2002



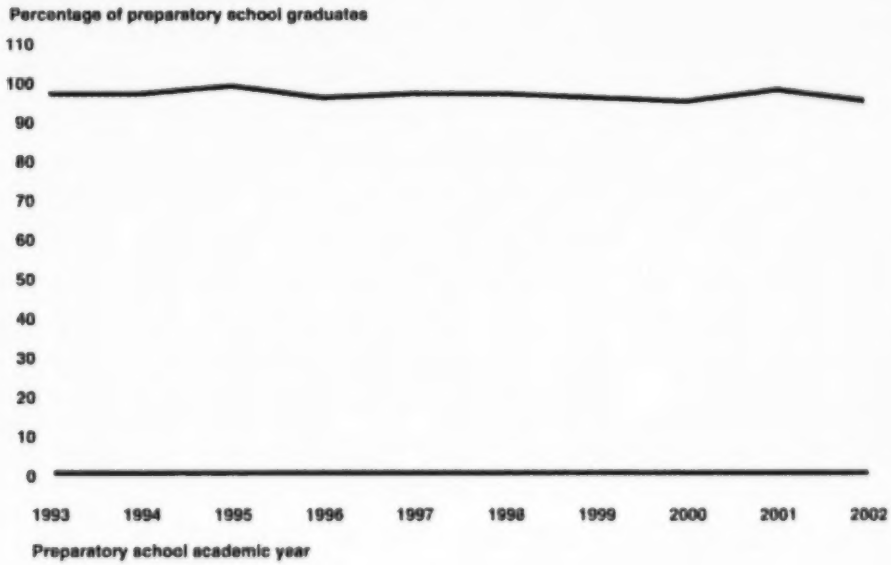
Source: GAO analysis of DOD data.

Note: At each of the three preparatory schools, some students do not graduate, but they may be admitted to an academy per a commanding officer's recommendation. Therefore, some acceptance rates may exceed 100 percent.

U.S. Military Academy Preparatory School

Figure 24 shows the rate at which U.S. Military Preparatory School students accepted appointments to attend the U.S. Military Academy. From 1993 through 2002, 97 percent of U.S. Military Academy Preparatory School graduates accepted appointments to attend the U.S. Military Academy.

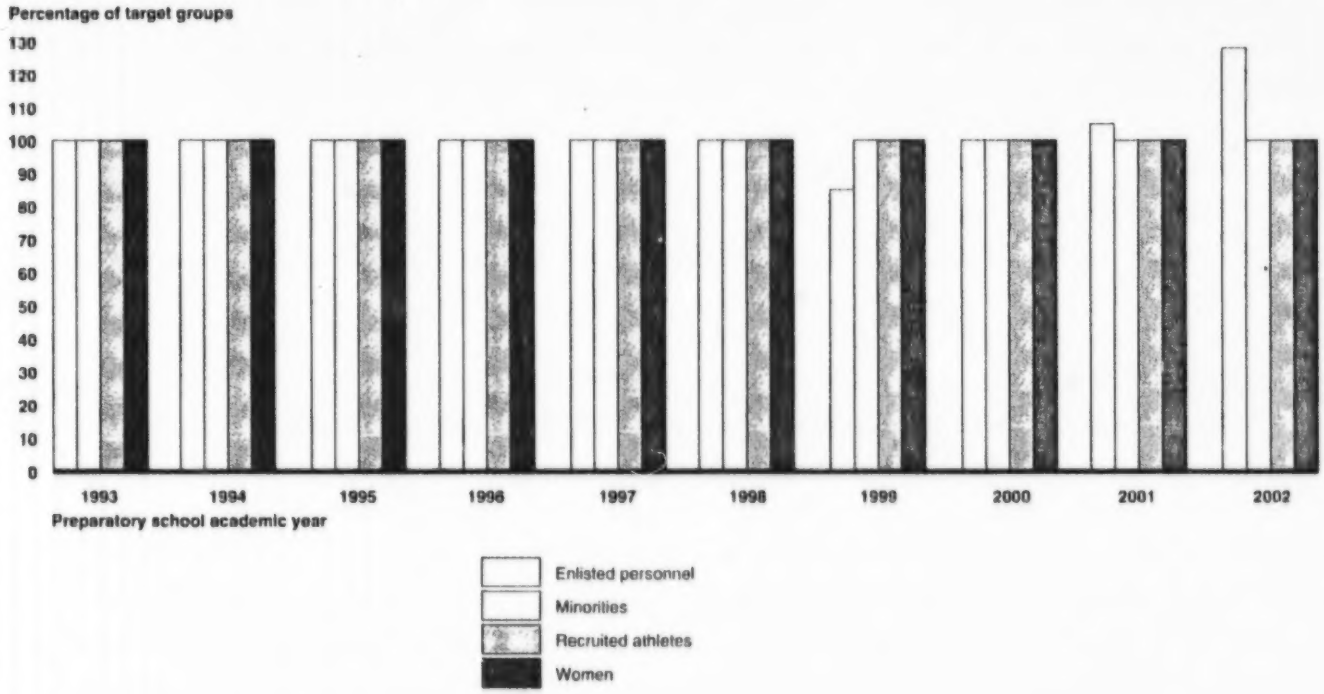
Figure 24: Percentage of U.S. Military Academy Preparatory School Graduates Accepting U.S. Military Academy Appointments for Preparatory School Academic Years 1993 through 2002



Source: GAO analysis of DOD data.

Figure 25 shows the rate at which Army preparatory school students in the target groups accepted appointments to attend the Military Academy. On average, almost all students in three target groups—minorities, recruited athletes, and women—accepted appointments into the U.S. Military Academy from 1993 through 2002. The acceptance rate for enlisted personnel decreased to 85 percent in 1999; however, it increased to 128 percent in 2002.

Figure 25: Percentage of Four Target Groups of U.S. Military Academy Preparatory School Graduates Accepting U.S. Military Academy Appointments for Preparatory School Academic Years 1993 through 2002

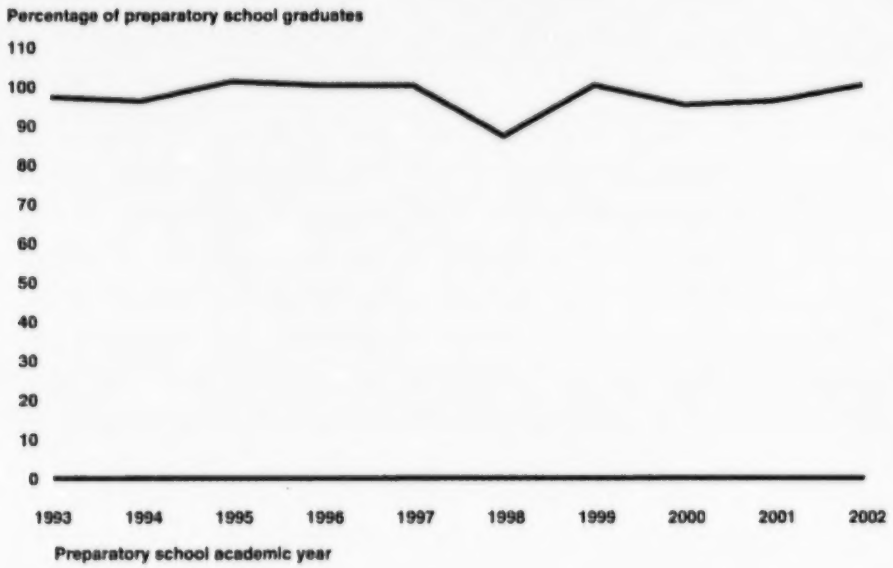


Source: GAO analysis of DOD data.

Note: At each of the three preparatory schools, some students do not graduate, but they may be admitted to an academy per a commanding officer's recommendation. Therefore, some acceptance rates may exceed 100 percent.

Figure 26 shows the acceptance rate, by Navy preparatory school graduates, of appointments into the Naval Academy. Rates remained relatively constant over 10 years, falling to a low of 87 percent in 1998 and increasing to 100 percent in 1999. On average, 97 percent of the graduates accepted appointments to attend the U.S. Naval Academy.

Figure 26: Percentage of U.S. Naval Academy Preparatory School Graduates Accepting U.S. Naval Academy Appointments for Preparatory School Academic Years 1993 through 2002

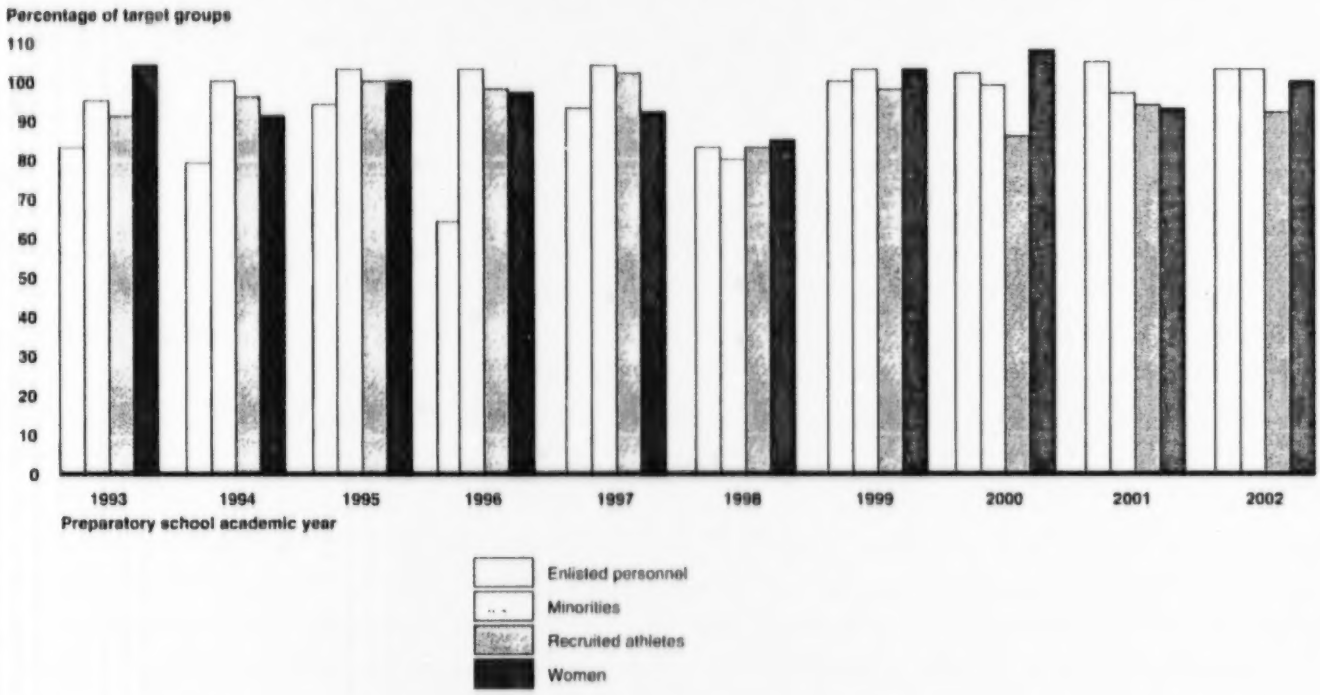


Source: GAO analysis of DOD data.

Note: At each of the three preparatory schools, some students do not graduate, but they may be admitted to an academy per a commanding officer's recommendation. Therefore, some acceptance rates may exceed 100 percent.

Figure 27 shows the rate at which Navy preparatory school students in the target groups accepted appointments to attend the Naval Academy. Women had the highest average acceptance rate among the four target groups, averaging 100 percent over 10 years. Although acceptance rates for enlisted personnel remained at or above 100 percent from 1999 through 2002, they had the lowest average acceptance rate, averaging 90 percent, over 10 years. On average, 99 percent of minorities and 95 percent of recruited athletes accepted nominations to attend the U.S. Naval Academy.

Figure 27: Percentage of Four Target Groups of U.S. Naval Academy Preparatory School Graduates Accepting U.S. Naval Academy Appointments for Preparatory School Academic Years 1993 through 2002



Source: GAO analysis of DOD data.

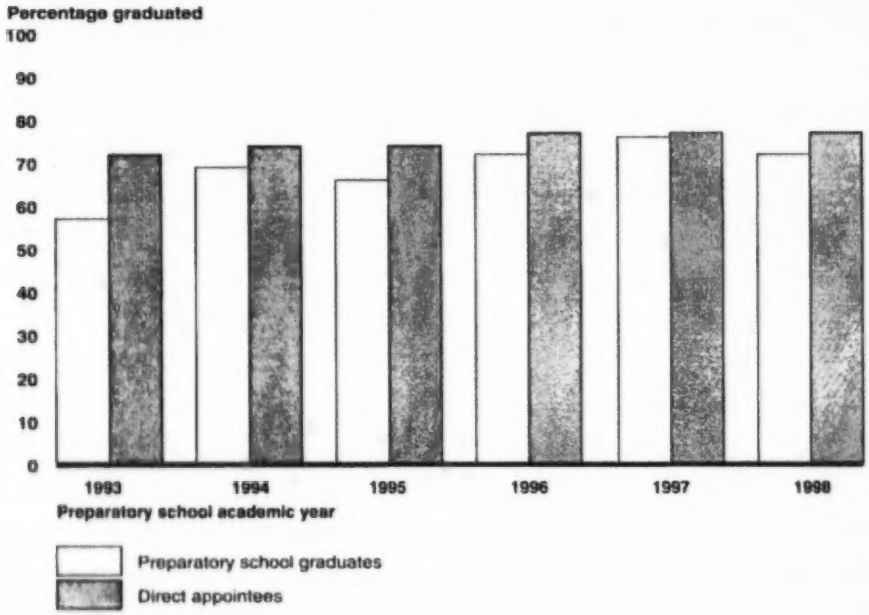
Note: At each of the three preparatory schools, some students do not graduate, but they may be admitted to an academy per a commanding officer's recommendation. Therefore, some acceptance rates may exceed 100 percent.

Appendix VII: Academy Graduation Rates for Preparatory School Graduates Versus Direct Appointees

U.S. Air Force Academy

Figure 28 shows a comparison between the Air Force Academy graduation rates of preparatory school graduates and those of students who accepted direct appointments to the academy. Academy graduation rates of Air Force Academy Preparatory School graduates from 1993 through 1998 were, on average, lower than those of direct appointees.[1] Only in 1993 was the difference in graduation rates between preparatory school graduates and direct appointees greater than 10 percent.

Figure 28: Comparative U.S. Air Force Academy Graduation Rates for Preparatory School Academic Years 1993 through 1998



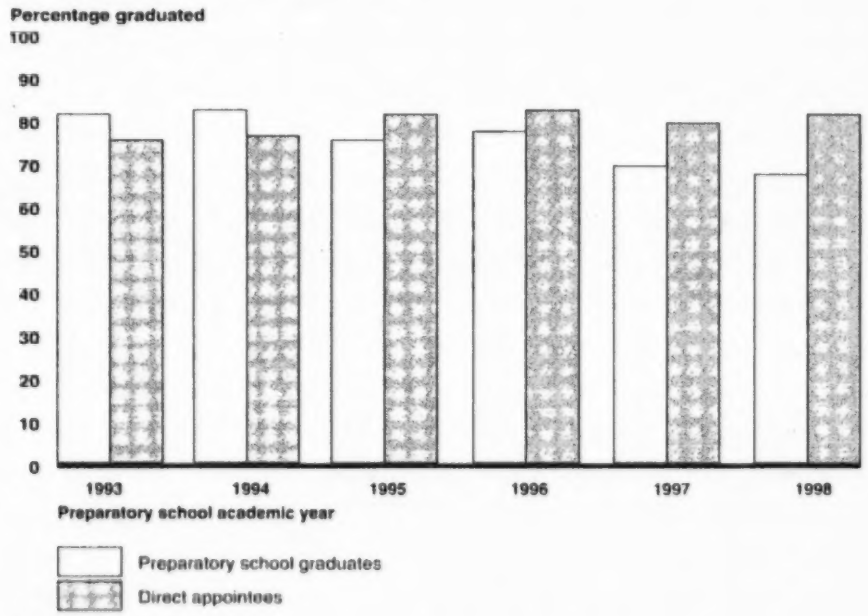
Source: GAO analysis of DOD data.

[1] All students who entered the academy after 1998 were still attending the academy and had not yet graduated at the time of this review.

U.S. Military Academy

Figure 29 shows a comparison between the Military Academy graduation rates of preparatory school graduates and those of students who accepted direct appointments to the academy. Academy graduation rates of Military Academy Preparatory School graduates from 1993 through 1998 were, on average, lower than those of direct appointees.[2]

Figure 29: Comparative U.S. Military Academy Graduation Rates for Preparatory School Academic Years 1993 through 1998



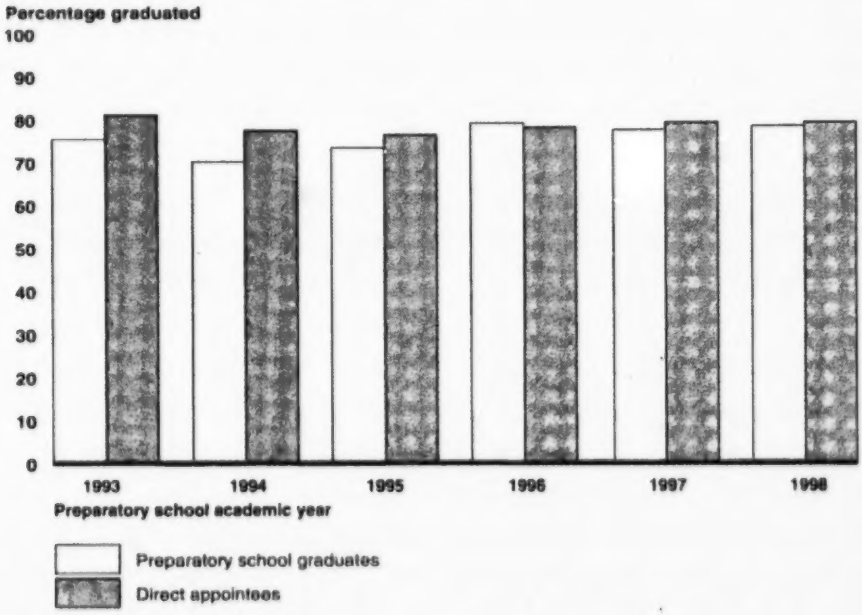
Source: GAO analysis of DOD data.

[2] All students who entered the academy after 1998 were still attending the academy and had not yet graduated at the time of this review.

U.S. Naval Academy

Figure 30 shows a comparison between the Naval Academy graduation rates of preparatory school graduates and those of students who accepted direct appointments to the academy. Academy graduation rates of Naval Academy Preparatory School graduates from 1993 through 1998 were, on average, lower than those of direct appointees.[3]

Figure 30: Comparative U.S. Naval Academy Graduation Rates for Preparatory School Academic Years 1993 through 1998



Source: GAO analysis of DOD data.

[3] All students who entered the academy after 1998 were still attending the academy and had not yet graduated at the time of this review.

Appendix VIII: Comments from the Department of Defense

OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

PERSONNEL AND READINESS

AUG 25 2003

Mr. Derek B. Stewart
Director, Defense Capabilities and Management
United States General Accounting Office
Washington, D.C. 20548

Dear Mr. Stewart:

This is the Department of Defense (DoD) response to the General Accounting Office (GAO) draft report, GAO-03-1017, "MILITARY EDUCATION: DoD Needs to Align Academy Preparatory Schools' Mission Statements With Overall Guidance and Establish Performance Goals," dated August 5, 2003 (GAO Code 350312).

The Department concurs with the report's conclusion that the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (OUSD(P&R)), in concert with the Services, should revise the mission statements for the Service Academy Preparatory Schools and establish performance goals and measures subject to greater DoD oversight in order to ensure these institutions are accomplishing their purpose.

The mission statements of the preparatory schools will be aligned with DoD guidance and Service expectations. Establishment of quantitative goals will follow in coordination with the Services, creating effective measures as well as appropriate standards for success against those measures. Finally, OUSD(P&R) will review and analyze these statistics over time, with qualitative evaluations of officership development, to ensure the successful performance of the preparatory schools.

The enclosure addresses the specific recommendations made by the GAO. The Department appreciates the opportunity to comment on the draft report.

Sincerely,

Charles S. Abell
Principal Deputy

Enclosure:
As stated

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

GAO-03-1017/GAO CODE 350312

"MILITARY EDUCATION: DoD Needs to Align Academy Preparatory Schools' Mission Statements With Overall Guidance and Establish Performance Goals"

**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE COMMENTS
TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

RECOMMENDATION 1: The GAO recommended that the Secretary of Defense direct the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, in concert with the Service headquarters and Service academies, to clarify the preparatory schools' mission statements by aligning these statements with the Department's guidance and the academies' expectations, which target student groups for primary enrollment consideration. (Page 22/Draft Report)

DoD RESPONSE: Concur.

RECOMMENDATION 2: The GAO recommended that the Secretary of Defense direct the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, in concert with the Service headquarters and Service academies, to establish quantified performance goals and measures, linked with the schools' mission statements. (Page 22/Draft Report)

DoD RESPONSE: Concur.

RECOMMENDATION 3: The GAO recommended that the Secretary of Defense direct the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, in concert with the Service headquarters and Service academies, to enhance the existing oversight framework by using quantified performance goals and measures to objectively evaluate the performance of the preparatory schools. (Page 23/Draft Report)

DoD RESPONSE: Concur. Department of Defense Directive 1322.22, *Service Academies*, will be revised as required.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Appendix IX: GAO Contact and Staff Acknowledgments

GAO Contact

Sandra F. Bell (202) 512-8981

Acknowledgments

In addition to the name above, Daniel J. Byrne, Leslie M. Gregor, David F. Keefer, Tina M. Morgan, David E. Moser, Cheryl A. Weissman, and Susan K. Woodward made key contributions to this report.

GAO's Mission

The General Accounting Office, the audit, evaluation and investigative arm of Congress, exists to support Congress in meeting its constitutional responsibilities and to help improve the performance and accountability of the federal government for the American people. GAO examines the use of public funds; evaluates federal programs and policies; and provides analyses, recommendations, and other assistance to help Congress make informed oversight, policy, and funding decisions. GAO's commitment to good government is reflected in its core values of accountability, integrity, and reliability.

Obtaining Copies of GAO Reports and Testimony

The fastest and easiest way to obtain copies of GAO documents at no cost is through the Internet. GAO's Web site (www.gao.gov) contains abstracts and full-text files of current reports and testimony and an expanding archive of older products. The Web site features a search engine to help you locate documents using key words and phrases. You can print these documents in their entirety, including charts and other graphics.

Each day, GAO issues a list of newly released reports, testimony, and correspondence. GAO posts this list, known as "Today's Reports," on its Web site daily. The list contains links to the full-text document files. To have GAO e-mail this list to you every afternoon, go to www.gao.gov and select "Subscribe to e-mail alerts" under the "Order GAO Products" heading.

Order by Mail or Phone

The first copy of each printed report is free. Additional copies are $2 each. A check or money order should be made out to the Superintendent of Documents. GAO also accepts VISA and Mastercard. Orders for 100 or more copies mailed to a single address are discounted 25 percent. Orders should be sent to:

U.S. General Accounting Office
441 G Street NW, Room LM
Washington, D.C. 20548

To order by Phone:	Voice:	(202) 512-6000
	TDD:	(202) 512-2537
	Fax:	(202) 512-6061

To Report Fraud, Waste, and Abuse in Federal Programs

Contact:

Web site: www.gao.gov/fraudnet/fraudnet.htm
E-mail: fraudnet@gao.gov
Automated answering system: (800) 424-5454 or (202) 512-7470

Public Affairs

Jeff Nelligan, Managing Director, NelliganJ@gao.gov (202) 512-4800
U.S. General Accounting Office, 441 G Street NW, Room 7149
Washington, D.C. 20548

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

United States
General Accounting Office
Washington, D.C. 20548-0001

Official Business
Penalty for Private Use $300

Address Service Requested

Presorted Standard
Postage & Fees Paid
GAO
Permit No. G100

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

NOTICE

Reproduction Basis

[ ] This document is covered by a signed "Reproduction Release (Blanket)" form (on file within the ERIC system), encompassing all or classes of documents from its source organization and, therefore, does not require a "Specific Document" Release form.

[X] This document is Federally-funded, or carries its own permission to reproduce, or is otherwise in the public domain and, therefore, may be reproduced by ERIC without a signed Reproduction Release form (either "Specific Document" or "Blanket").